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HOMES PU
STORIES.



**HOME-SPUN
STORIES.**



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HOME-SPUN STORIES.

BY

CHERITH,

AUTHOR OF 'THE STORM-PRAYER APPEAL,' ETC.



LONDON:

HATCHARDS, PICCADILLY.

1877.

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TO
ELIZABETH, LADY ABINGER,

AS A TRIBUTE OF HEARTFELT GRATITUDE

AND TRUE AFFECTION

FOR KINDNESS SHOWN IN DARK DAYS,

This little Work is Dedicated

BY

HER AFFECTIONATE

CHERITH.



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SCORESBY QUAY;

OR,

THE ADMIRAL.

THE sea for the last twenty-four hours had been moaning mournfully, as if bewailing all the sorrow it would bring before to-morrow's sunrise. The seagull, on heavy wing, had swept landward, as if it sought not to witness all that woe. The peahen that morning, as she sat on the garden-wall of the Abbey House, had screamed her shrill note (Cassandra-like, foretelling the coming storm); and the fishermen, as they had idly loitered about the Quay, in their tawny-coloured oiled-canvas smock-jackets, remarked to each other with saddened voices, 'That many a poor lad ere night would wish himself again by his mother's hearth, and that

many a wife would never see her man again in their cottage,' for that Admiral Fitzroy's signal-post marked 'Hurricane.'

Evening was beginning to draw in,—a wild October evening. The threatened storm was lashing itself into a fury. The sea was now boiling and surging under the strong nor'easter, and the roar of its waters could plainly be heard in Admiral Rochefort's little parlour.

The Admiral drew his chair nearer to the bright fire on the hearth, and took up a newspaper to read, but he soon laid it down again : his thoughts were not with the printed words, but with the storm raging without, and human lives exposed to it.

After a short time he rang the bell, which was quickly answered by an old man-of-war's man, who had formerly served in the Admiral's flag-ship, and was now his faithful and devoted servant. 'Peter,' said the Admiral, 'if it is possible to keep your legs on the cliff, just take a turn there, and see whether you can see any vessels or boats in distress ; then go down to the Quay, and find out whether we

are likely to be wanted there this evening. The Scoresby men have brave hearts and willing hands, but they want sometimes a head to direct them, and as the old proverb says, "Two heads are better than one," you and I will both go down to the Quay, Peter, if needed.'

'Aye, aye, sir,' said the old quarter-deck man ; 'I will go and give a good look-out, and then come back and give my report, Admiral :' and with a naval salute, Peter left the room.

The Admiral rose from his chair, as if his thoughts, or rather kind heart, would not let him rest by his own comfortable fireside, whilst his poor fellow-creatures were, perhaps, struggling with death, without in the storm. With his hands clasped behind him, he paced backwards and forwards the room, as if once again treading the quarter-deck.

'Yes,' said the Admiral, as if speaking out loud to himself ; 'men of science have learnt to foretell the coming storm, and a humane government have raised the warning signal to tell men of its approach ; but will Christians

never learn that they, one and all, have their duties also in such weather? How often it is said by our home-hearths on wild stormy nights, "What a fearful night at sea!" without, perhaps, one extra prayer being said for our brethren in danger. When the storm-tossed disciples uttered the cry, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" our great Example arose (no apathy in Him), used His power, and there was a calm. And if this anguish-cry is asked now, by our brethren in danger, of our Church, should not she follow in the footsteps of her Head, and use *her* power—prayer? Oh! why in stormy weather is not prayer used in our churches, and in family worship in our homes, "to call upon God that He may think upon our brethren that they perish not;" and surely, surely, if this were done,' repeated the Admiral, with greater warmth, 'a Trinity of love would grant to His Church and people's united cry at least *one* life this wild, wind-maddened night! Surely, if but from twenty churches and English homes there rose up with one accord a morning and evening sacrifice of pleading for our brethren

at sea, the gracious answer would be returned, "Yet will I not destroy for twenty's sake." We pray for rain, we pray for fair weather, then for lives at sea and souls in peril: has the Church no extra prayer, when we are in safety and they in danger?'

And so saying, the Admiral, one of the bravest men in H. M. Navy, who had done good service in every quarter of the globe, whose breast was adorned with many a well-earned medal, threw himself on his knees, and bowed his head in earnest prayer. Did the thought of the fair-haired midshipman, the last son (the Benjamin) of his dead wife—the brave lad who had lost his life falling from a spar when in a storm off the North American Station springing to furl a sail which the numbed fingers of a sailor had failed to do—did the thought of that loved child struggling with the waves give a fervour to the father's prayers now? Possibly it did, for it is sorrow that teaches the value, and comfort, and power of prayer. Oh! dear friends, it will be known only at the great Judgment Day, when the thoughts of men's hearts

shall be revealed, how many knees would never have been bowed in prayer if the heart first had not been bowed in grief.

Peter had returned from his 'look-out,' and had opened the door to make his report to the Admiral, but had closed it again unnoticed when he saw his master on his knees in prayer, and he did not enter the parlour again until he heard the Admiral resume his walk to and fro. But in after years, when Peter used to tell the sad tale of the closing scene, the faithful old servant's voice would falter as he said it was recorded in heaven of his dear master that evening, as of Paul of old, 'Behold he prayeth.'

Peter's report was a heart-rending one. Two smacks had been seen half-an-hour before, labouring heavily to enter Scoresby Harbour, but they could not now be seen, for a passing rain squall hid them from view ; but the fishermen hoped that as that drifted away they might come in all safe to harbour. But though they thus hoped against hope, they really feared for them that the gale from the nor'-east would prevent their getting round the Southern Cliff.

The names of the two vessels could not be made out at such a distance, so anxious parents and loving wives were hurrying down to the Quay to see whether it was their dear ones whose lives were thus in danger.

Before I go on with my tale, I must, that you may the better understand the conclusion, explain to you the situation of the quaint old town of Scoresby, built down in a deep ravine, through which a river runs, flowing into the sea. From the river rises the North Cliff, boasting its modern fashionable terraces and streets, and its grand hotel, and the South Cliff, which boasts its old Saxon church, standing in its crowded graveyard, and separated only by a road from the beautiful old abbey with its narrow lancet windows, now alas ! a ruin. A hundred and ninety steps, with occasional stone benches where the weary can rest, lead from the old town to the yet older church ; and often, as I have toiled up them to worship within its walls, I have felt that they were like a Christian's life, steep and weary, but leading at last to our Father's home above, not made with hands.

eternal in the heavens. And the old church itself—what a landmark it must have been to many a weary mariner as they strove to enter Scoresby Harbour, which, alas! many never would reach. The only haven of rest they would know would be the quiet graveyard, in which, as I said before, the church stood, and where their bodies would be laid as the cruel waves washed them on shore.

Often, also, have I crossed the road from the churchyard to sit awhile amongst the old abbey ruins that looked far and wide over the sea, and as I have rested there I have asked, Why did the monks, who loved of old to build in quiet valleys, amidst fruit-laden orchards and green fields, where their cattle could graze knee-deep in pasturage, build Scoresby Abbey on this bleak point of land? Was it because, looking north and south over the ocean, they could see storm-distressed vessels in their hours of danger, and then, like Christian men, pray to the Almighty and All-merciful One, that He would think upon the poor mariners, and bring them to the haven where they would be?

But we have left the Admiral and Peter and our tale too long, so to return to my story. No sooner had Peter made his report to his master than both started together for the Quay, which had as it were two horns, the North and the South Pier.

The inner bend of the Quay was crowded with men and women, the latter in their anxiety to know the fate of their relations braving the power of the storm, and leading in their hands toddling children, whom they could not leave behind in their cottage homes. Few ventured on the South Pier, exposed as it was to the full fury of the storm blowing from the north-east; one woman alone, half frantic with grief, rushed on, a little toddling boy clinging to her gown. In her agony for her husband, the usually tender mother seemed to have forgotten the presence of the child. It was Mary Phillips, who before her marriage had, as pretty Mary Hardinge, been the toast and belle of the neighbouring village of Thorpe.

All the Hardinges had been seafaring people, and Mary had known the sad great sorrow of

losing her father and all her four brothers at sea ; and when the news came to Thorpe that her two last surviving brothers had been drowned off Greenland (their boat upsetting when harpooning a whale), Mary's widowed mother had never again held up her head, but saying with old Jacob, ' If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved,' died the following winter, when the ice-wind was sweeping over the moorland and howling round the cottage.

Mary Hardinge had said she would never marry a sailor, never know her mother's anxiety of waiting and watching for those who would never return, listening for voices that would never be heard again by the home-hearth, and for loved ones who slept beneath the sea : never share her mother's lot of bearing children who would not be spared to comfort and cheer her old age. Mary had said all this, and then did marry a sailor, forgetting (like many another woman) all her resolutions when good Will Phillips asked her to be his wife ; for how could she refuse and say ' No ' to him, who had been as a son to her mother in her

sorrow, trying to supply by his manly, honest labours, many an extra comfort for the bereaved widow, which, after the loss of her husband and sons, Mrs. Hardinge could not have gotten for herself?

And so Mary Hardinge became Will Phillips' wife. Never had she regretted it, for a happier home was not to be found in the parish of Scoresby than that of the Phillips. 'As for me and my house we will serve the Lord,' was the text that Will had himself prettily painted on a board, which he and his darling Mary had together nailed up over the kitchen chimney the first day of their marriage; and Will had always said that he and his wife had proved the truth of that other text, 'The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.' And when a child's cradle was added to the furniture, it seemed as if their happiness was complete.

As soon as the child grew old enough to know its father, it had been Mary's habit, whenever Will's boat was coming into harbour, and the weather was fine enough, to go with the

child down to the pier to meet her husband, and have the welcome home-kiss : and she had taught the little one to clap its wee hands as soon as she told it daddy was coming home again.

The Phillips were great favourites of the Admiral, and it made his heart ache when he saw poor Mary thus rush towards the pier, the little boy clinging to her. The two smacks were now near enough to be recognised by the spectators, as the boats tried to beat round the point on which the church was built, and pass round the South Pier.

One of these smacks was Phillips'. In vain it tried to enter the harbour. Each time it appeared almost in safe waters, a blast from the nor'-easter drove it out again, beating it against the great huge fallen rocks which lie there under the southern cliff. At last the boat struck on one of these with such force that all saw it must soon go to pieces, as the wild waves kept beating it on the rocks, without lifting it off.

‘It is my husband’s boat—my husband’s

boat !' screamed the poor wife. ' My God, my God, save him ! Is it not enough that the hungry, cruel sea has taken father and brothers ? Must it have my husband, the father of my boy, also ? Will the sea, with its open jaws, never be satisfied ?'

At the words, ' My husband's boat,' the poor little child, understanding nought of its father's dangers and its mother's agony, began clapping its hands, shouting out, ' Daddy's boat ! Daddy's coming home ! Daddy's boat is dancing so !' And still clinging to its mother's dress, the wee lad began dancing as he again repeated, ' Daddy's boat dances so, like me !'

Alas ! what innocent, unconscious mockery, as it were, of his father's mortal dangers !

' The rockets and ropes !' shouted Phillips, and his manly voice could be heard even amidst the roar of wind and water. Holding and keeping back Mary Phillips and her child from accompanying them, as far as the men dared go towards the end of the pier, as far as the Southern Rock gave them any small protection from being blown or washed off the jetty, the

brave Scoresby fishermen went to try and save Phillips and his mates by throwing the rocket and rope; but each time they threw them, rockets and ropes fell short of the smack, which would soon be beaten in pieces. 'Give me rocket and ropes,' said Admiral Rochefort suddenly, in a tone of command, as if once again on his own quarter-deck.

'Master ! dear master !' cried Peter in alarm, as he saw what the Admiral was about to do, 'Do not go to the extreme end of the pier ! No creature can go there and live. You will be washed off it.'

'Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,' answered the Admiral ; then adding, as if foreseeing the coming catastrophe, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' Then advancing to the extreme end of the jetty, where there was no protection from the pitiless storm, the brave Admiral threw rocket and rope to the smack. This time it did reach Phillips' boat, and a shout of wild delight rose from the spectators. But why was it immediately followed by one

scream of horror? Was it in the act of throwing the rope?—was it by a sudden blast of wind?—or was it by a wave that dashed over the pier? None could ever tell, so instantaneous had been the disaster, whilst all eyes had been fixed on Phillips' boat, but the Admiral had been swept off the pier, and was now for one second seen struggling in the harbour's troubled waters. In one instant Peter sprang into a boat moored there by heavy chains, and then jumping from craft to craft, was able to seize his beloved master as he was whirled by on the incoming tide, but as they heavily dragged the inanimate form of the brave old man up on the pier, all saw that he had surrendered his gallant spirit to the God to whom he had commended it, that he had entered the joy of his Lord. But not in vain had the Admiral Rochefort given his life. All those for whom he had cheerfully sacrificed it were saved. Phillips and all his crew safely reached the shore.

Five days later, it was a calm October day, when every dewdrop on the long grass in the old abbey glistened in the bright sunshine. The

sea had sunk to repose, as if ashamed of its late fury.

In the distant offing, ships with their white sails spread were passing south, but no fisher boats plying their usual busy trade were to be seen over the blue expanse, for every fisherman, both of Scoresby and the surrounding villages, would have felt for ever disgraced in his own eyes and those of his neighbours, had he been watching his nets that day instead of following the honoured remains of Admiral Rochefort to his rest. About noon all the humble mourners assembled at the Admiral's house. After the coffin carried by six men followed Peter, then Phillips and his wife, leading the child between them ; then, three and three abreast, the fishermen. Crape bound the left arm of their blue jackets. After them followed women and children, each wearing some mourning token. The fishermen in turn sought the honour of bearing the bier ; every shop was shut in Scoresby ; slowly, reverently, mourning, weeping, they carried the remains of the Admiral up those steep steps to the old church, from which

the bell was tolling out its funeral knell, the sounds of which were floating far away on the still air over the moorland and over the calm sea. At the little wicket gate the clergyman met the bearers, with those oft-repeated, but not less comforting words, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that believeth on me shall never die.' Then they carried him into the old church, where he had been so long a constant worshipper. The mourners were so many that hundreds could not get into it, but had to stand without, and as the rise and fall of the clergyman's voice as he read the Service fell on their ears, it seemed to blend in with the sound of the gentle lapping of the waves as they broke on the shore.

Again was the coffin uplifted, to lay him in his last home. Strong men were not ashamed of their feeling as they saw him lowered into the grave, and heard the words, 'We commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope

of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then a pause, and that triumphant assurance followed, 'I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours.' When all was over, Phillips' child toddled up to the yet unfilled grave, and throwing in a beautiful wreath of white chrysanthemums from the cottage garden said, 'From daddy and mammy, and little Willie's love.' The men and women had kept back that the innocent child should be the first to give its offering of love. Then many stepped forward, not only to take a last look of the fisherman's friend, but also to lay such flowers—crosses of crimson dahlias, and nose-gays of fuchsias and sweet-smelling mignonette, or aught fragrant that the late gale had spared in their gardens ; and those loving ones who had no gardens had culled some prized flower from their cottage window that they might add their mite.

Phillips and his wife were the last to leave the churchyard. A low sorrowing wail broke from

the child, who exclaimed with sobs as he turned and saw the sexton filling in the earth over the coffin strewed with flowers, 'Oh daddy! the naughty men are killing the flowers!' It was difficult to comfort the child. Aye, little one, it was well to grieve over the destroyed lives of the flowers; but he whom they covered, and who gave his life for his friends, will rise again to bloom in the courts of the Lord. A cottage subscription was raised, and a cross erected with it to the memory of the Admiral, and on it were engraven his last words, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

Dear friends, has this short story moved you with its tale of noble deeds? If so, pause one moment and think of Him, the Great Example of all noble deeds. Think how Christ died for the ungodly. St. Paul says, 'Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, but God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,' that we should have life through His death.

Friends, have you ever fully understood, or

often thought on this,—has your heart gladdened at it,—that He died for you? If you have not, learn to value it. Say each morning, Christ died for me,—suffered, agonised for me. Let your morning prayer be, Jesus, give me of Thy Holy Spirit that I may not grieve Thee, Who hast so loved me. Say each night, Jesus died for me. Let your evening prayer be, Christ, if I have sinned against Thee this day, pardon, blot out my sins, and remember them no more.

Dear friends, the tale asks you also a solemn question. If death's cold hand were near you now, if you had this night to give back your spirit to Him that gave it, could you say, as Jesus said on the cross, as Stephen said when meeting a cruel death, as the Admiral said when giving his life to save another, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit? And yet it was from having learnt these words from their Lord and Master, that Stephen and the Admiral found courage to meet death. Christ's Father was their Father. He had ascended to His Father and their Father, and to them to live was Christ, but to die was gain. They

feared not death, through Him who had conquered death. Thus the brave Admiral could say, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, Who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Friends, may this victory be yours and mine. Amen.

'Jesus lives ! no longer now
Can thy terrors, Death, appal us :
Jesus lives ! by this we know,
Thou, O Grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia !

'Jesus lives ! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal ;
This shall calm our trembling breath,
When we pass its gloomy portal.
Alleluia !

'Jesus lives ! for us He died ;
Then alone to Jesus living,
Pure in heart may we abide,
Glory to our Saviour giving.
Alleluia !

'Jesus lives ! to Him the throne
Over all the world is given ;
May we go where He is gone,
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.
Alleluia !

WILD WILL.

It is a pleasant thing in life to look back on battles fought and won, especially when the enemy fought against has been 'Wrong,' and the weapon used in the fight, all-conquering Love. So, as an old Greenwich pensioner will spin his yarns, and talk of the glorious first of June and many a sea-fight, let me tell you of a victory won by Mary Somers in days long past and gone.

Girlhood had merged into womanhood ; it was the spring-time of Mary Somers' life and the springtide of the year, when she used to obtain her mother's consent to pass her Saturdays and Sundays with her cousin at Persham, one of the most beautiful spots in rural Surrey.

To escape from London and visits, to green fields and country sounds, was Miss Somers' great delight ; but the cream of the visit was the Sunday-school, where she and her cousin regularly taught.

All the ladies followed each one their own method of teaching. The week-day school-mistress was only paid for week-day teaching, and was absent on Sundays. The Vicar, a pale, delicate young man, in wretched health, rested between the services ; so each lady did her best in her own class, without any regular system. But all this want of systematic discipline was bad for the children, of which Mary Somers had afterwards full proof. Poor Mr. Witham, the vicar, used to go to Mary's aunt, and make himself miserable deploring the wickedness around him, with which he had neither health nor energy to grapple. He meant and desired to do his duty ; but, sensitive and nervous, he shrank from his rough parishioners, and seemed overwhelmed with the task of reforming them.

The parishioners, I must confess, were a lawless set. Bargemen on the canal, poachers in

the distant cottages on the commons round Lord Brantley's estate, and every sin seemed growing in the parish, whilst Mr. Witham was grieving over it. Miss Somers' nature was the exact opposite to his. If she saw a difficulty, she set herself to work to overcome it, singing at her task ; and often she would ask the depressed Vicar why, instead of lamenting over his parishioners, he did not first love them, and then try to mend them ; for, as she used to add, no one minds the mending if they get the loving. That was a happy spring to Mary Somers, as week after week rolled by and she taught in the schools ; but these pleasant days got a check. Mrs. Somers fell seriously ill, and could not be left. So spring died, summer was born, and was nearly past before Mary could again go to Persham ; and when she did go, sad was the news she heard.

A new mistress had come to the school ; she was rude to the ladies. The ladies would not go to the school till the teacher was dismissed. This the Vicar would not do. As I said before, the mistress was not paid to teach

on Sundays. Mr. Witham had not health to do it, and the ladies would not now do it.

After hearing all this, Mary quietly said, 'I do not understand; who, then, *does* teach the children?'

'No one,' was the short reply.

'No one!' repeated Miss Somers. 'Poor lambs! without a shepherd.'

So saying, she rose from the luncheon-table, and, putting on her bonnet, left the house, humming (for sing she must)—

'Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching on to war.'

And war it was. On reaching the school, she found about sixty boys and girls of all ages, from toddling children to heavy farming lads, all having a game of follow-the-leader over the benches. Into this wild herd Mary walked, saying with her bright voice,—

'Well, children, I am come to teach you.'

'That you baint,' shouted a rough lad of about twelve years of age, known in the village by the name of Wild Will.

‘That you baint,’ chorussed many of the children ; and there was a rush from the room into the school courtyard.

Profiting by this rush out, Mary followed, locked the door, and passed down the village to the Vicarage. After asking to see the Vicar, and expressing regret to him that she had disturbed him in his needed rest, she told him all that had occurred, adding, she would undertake the teaching, if he (like a good, kind man) would only this once come to the school, put her in authority, and himself tell the children that he authorised her to teach them.

Mr. Witham did as Mary Somers asked him ; he accompanied her to the school, called on the children in a mild voice, told them all to be good, as he was sure they would be delighted to hear that he had given Miss Somers permission to teach them, as she was good enough to do so. Mary felt sure that they were *not* delighted at the news. She saw Wild Will look brimming over with naughtiness as he primed the other boys with a volley of mischief, to be discharged at her as soon as the Vicar left.

Alas ! and so it proved. No sooner was the Vicar gone than cat-calls, whistlings, cries, fell on Mary's ears. One by one she turned the rebels out, and relocked the door ; but shocks of heads were thrust in at the low unfastened lattice windows.

In vain Miss Somers collected the younger children around her ; they could not attend, and she with difficulty could teach. Still she persevered, not that day only, but Sunday after Sunday, with doors locked, not for fear of the Jews, but of the rebels. Still the school did increase ; her patience won some, and the interest of her Bible stories the others ; but as none helped her, her chief difficulty was her school being a mixed one of boys and girls. At last the young son of a neighbouring farmer kindly came and offered to take the boys, whilst she taught the girls. This aid she gratefully accepted.

Months past on, the golden harvest had been gathered in, the swallows had taken flight to warmer lands : still Mary taught ; when one Saturday afternoon, Mr. Witham came to Mary's aunt with a sad tale of sorrow. There was one

family at the outskirts of the village, by the chalk-pits, whose character was the worst in the parish. The young girls (the daughters) lived in sin; the father and one brother were in prison for poaching; another son had been burnt to death whilst lying unconscious from drink near a lime-kiln fire; and the only good one (and right excellent was poor Joe) had gone away to Yorkshire to work as a navvy, that he might not witness his sisters' shame and his mother's want. Every penny that poor Joe could scrape together, he regularly sent to his mother. And now that morning's post had brought the sad news that, when excavating in a tunnel, the earth had fallen in on him, crushing in his chest; and that when he was extricated, the only words were, 'Jesus—my mother!' and then expired. The neighbours had sent for the Vicar, who had just returned from the mother's cottage. As he related the scene he had witnessed to Mary's aunt, the kind-hearted man was quite overcome.

It was autumn, and the days soon close in at that season of the year. But on hearing of this

sorrow, Mary started across the fields for the cottage. Dark clouds hung heavily under the dull grey sky. The long grass by the side of the path was heavy from the last night's dew, for that day's sun had not been warm enough to dry it. The pretty white flower of the dead nettle looked as if it had taken a trip to London, and had bathed in its yellow fog, and had come back to the country ashamed of its soiled whiteness. The mouldy blackberries weighed down the briar branches in a melancholy manner: all nature was depressing.

Mary silently prayed as she briskly walked along, that God would put into her heart comforting words to speak. But something seemed to press on her spirits, and she could not settle what to say.

On reaching the cottage, Mary gently tapped and then entered. The scene was indeed heart-breaking. The bare room proclaimed want; the weeping women—mother and daughters—told of sorrow; and the haggard look, even on the young girls' faces, spoke too plainly of sin.

Mary sat down by the mother, and said

softly, 'I came to see you, as I heard the dear Jesus had so loved your Joe that He has taken him to rest, and peace, and glory.'

Miss Somers has often said she will never forget the poor woman's look as she raised her tear-swollen face at these words. 'Rest, and peace, and glory !' What words of love to be spoken where hitherto only oaths of the drunken and sin and shame were known !

As on a stormy day, dark clouds pass across the sea, and between the dark, drifting clouds a stream of sunlight will rest for a moment on the troubled water, such a transitory light passed over the weeping mother's face as she repeated, 'My Joe, in peace, and rest, and glory !' a second time repeating 'glory' as if she could hardly understand the word.

'Yes,' answered Mary Somers, 'in glory ;' pausing after the word, then adding, 'The dear Jesus knows every thought, and He knew how Joe loved Him and how you loved Joe ; so He, the dear Jesus, has taken Joe to heaven that he may be ready at the golden gates to welcome you, his dear mother, there when you also go in.

What joy it will be for you to see your Joe an angel, his robes washed white in Jesus' blood !'

'My Joe an angel, waiting for *me* !' muttered the poor woman, and with such an emphasis on the word 'me ;' as much as to say, 'You cannot know much of us and our cottage when you say that.' .

'Yes,' again repeated Miss Somers ; for the ear of sorrow is so dulled by grief, you must repeat often the same truth before it can be taken in. 'Christ has said, "I go to prepare a place for *you*, that where I am there may *you* be also ;" and your Joe is there, in Christ's home. No sickness, no sorrow, no parting ; only glory. Jesus loved Joe, and Joe loved Jesus ; so Christ took him to live with Him. You know when you used to go to Walton how you used to like to find a loving Joe watching at your door for his mother's return ? Just fancy how Joe is waiting and watching for you in Jesus' home ! You will go to him, will you not, and love Jesus who loved Joe, and whom Joe loved ?

As Mary spoke, the poor mother's sobs had become less and less hysterical, but no words

escaped her ; only her hard, horny hand was laid on Mary Somers, with a grasp that seemed to give the pledge, 'I will try to meet my Joe in glory.'

Miss Somers then left the cottage, first telling the daughters to send some one to her aunt's that evening, as she (Mary) had some mourning she would give them.

Perhaps some will say, but Mary Somers never spoke to her of her sins and repentance. But Mary had learnt one great principle : in the time of sorrow not to speak of past sins, but only of present Undying Love ; for they who love much will pray to sin little, that they may not grieve Infinite Love.

Later, in the evening, one of her aunt's servants told Mary that the poor woman had sent one of her sons (a young lad) for the mourning. Taking up the parcel she had collected, and from the dessert-table some rosy-faced apples, Miss Somers went to the hall to speak to the messenger, when great was her surprise to find that he, poor Joe's brother, was none else than her troublesome rebel, Wild Will !

Never raise up past sins, but speak hopefully

for the future, had ever been one of Mary's rules of action, so taking no notice of the boy's ashamed look, Miss Somers put both parcel and apples on the table before Will, saying, 'Take the parcel to your mother, Will, and tell her again how sorry I am for you all ; and that I will not forget you all this evening when I pray to-night to that Jesus whom Joe loved. And here are some apples for you, Will, for coming for your mother's parcel.'

With something between a gulp and a sob, Will clutched the parcel with one hand, pushing away the apples with the other, saying, 'I will take the parcel to mother, Miss, and thank you ; but I can't take the apples. Please, indeed, Miss, don't ask me, I have been such a bad boy to you.' And then, as if a happy thought struck him, he added, 'Please, Miss, I will tell you what I will do, I will wash little brother Tommy's face, and bring him myself to school, if you will teach us both.'

'Now that is kind,' replied Mary ; 'I should like it so much ; but, Will, Mr. Harris takes the boys, and I now only teach the girls.'

‘Oh, don’t say that!’ said Will, quite crest-fallen. ‘I and Tommy will stand with the girls, if you will but teach me.’

‘Agreed!’ said Miss Somers; ‘and now we are fast friends, are we not? Will, let us shake hands.’

The next day, Sunday, the first at the school was Will, with his little brother, both washed and with hair combed.

‘I washed he myself; don’t he look nice—the little one?’ said poor Will, pointing to little Tommy with evident pride.

‘Very,’ said Mary, stroking the little lad; ‘and, Will, Jesus has said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”’

‘Please, Miss,’ asked Will, ‘do you mean brother Joe’s Jesus said them pretty words? Oh, do tell me and Tommy about brother Joe’s Jesus.’

And about brother Joe’s Jesus *did* Mary teach these two lads Sunday after Sunday, and for many weeks did they stand amongst the girls, despite the jeering of the village boys; and never did Will fail to bring his brother to Mary’s class, until

Mary herself, with sorrow and many prayers, had to say farewell to them, to take her almost blind mother away to sunny Italy ; and as, before her return, her aunt had sold the house, Mary never saw Persham again.

Six years passed away, and Miss Somers was again in London, when one morning she received a note from Mr. Burke, Chaplain of St. —'s Hospital.

Mr. Burke was one of those devoted servants of God with which, happily for England, her Church abounds, who, having respect unto the recompense of the reward, toil for their Master through the burden and heat of the day, looking on to the time when their sun shall sink in the west, and they shall enter the rest prepared for the children of God. This excellent man wrote to Mary to say that there was a young man of the name of Ekin dying in the hospital, and that he much wished to see her ; and that as he, Mr. Burke, thought the young man was fast sinking he hoped she would come at once ; that he inclosed his card as a pass for the porter to admit her,

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as it was not 'Visitors' Day,' at the St. ——'s Hospital.

Miss Somers called a cab and started immediately. On showing the card to the hall porter, the nurse of the Grosvenor Ward was summoned, who led Mary to a bed in her ward, where lay a fine young man. His eyes (deep sunk) were closed. A hectic spot burnt on his hollow cheek, and his black hair clung limp to his forehead.

Mary looked at him for a moment, and then said in a low tone to the nurse, 'Is there not a mistake? I do not think I know him.'

The young man opened his eyes at the sound of Mary's voice, himself answering her query. 'Do you not know me, Miss?' he asked, with a faint smile. 'Have you forgotten the rebellious boy, Wild Will?'

Yes, there lay her old scholar, the dark shade of death fast closing round him. Mary was much affected as she sat down by him, and said, 'Will, I am sorry to see you here.'

'Sorry!' said the young man, and a look of ineffable joy passed over his face. 'No, not

sorry! What were the first words you ever said in mother's cottage? You told mother, Jesus so loved Joe that He had taken him to glory, and that he was an angel there. I had once seen a picture of an angel, all white, with white wings, and glory round its head, and as I was hiding in the back kitchen, hearing all you said to mother, I seemed, in the dark, to see Joe; he did not wear his old fustian clothes, but was in white, like the picture, and often of a night I have seemed to see Joe an angel, and mother has gone to Joe also.'

'Have you, Will, lost your mother also?' asked Mary.

'Yes, miss, but she died so happy. The winter you left Persham, Mr. Witham became so much worse that he gave up his living to a right good gentleman, who seemed always trying to put his footsteps in the footprints of our Lord, and follow his Master. Mother went to the new vicar and told him she was no scholar, and had no learning, but would he teach her how to love her dear Joe's Jesus; and the clergyman promised her he would, by

the help of the Holy Spirit ; and oh,' said Will, ' he did keep his promise ; he came often to the cottage, and taught mother and me, morning and evening, to kneel together and pray,—“ O Lord God, blot out our past sins through Jesu's blood. Give us of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may learn so to please Thee on earth, that we may live with Thee hereafter in glory.” He did make mother's death happy. She was never regular well after Joe's death, but seemed to pine away till she got so weak she could hardly get about, but we did not think her end was so near. One evening we were all at tea, and mother was propped up in a chair, when suddenly she raised her hands, and trying to get up from the chair, cried out, “ Joe is calling me !” and fell back dead. Joe had not called her, Miss, but Jesus had ; and so she, too, was took to glory :’ and then he added, with a look of unfeigned humility, ‘ And now I hope I am going also,—my sins blotted out in Jesus' blood ; and think, Miss, Mr. Burke, our chaplain, showed me that text, “ Thy sins and thy iniquity I will remember no more.”

What love ! not only to forgive, but to forget : just what we poor sinners find it so difficult to do ; sometimes I find it difficult to understand how I, so unworthy, shall be joining soon the chorus of ‘ Worthy the Lamb who was slain for us.’

His cheeks flushed, and his eye brightened, as he said these words ; and Mary was fearing the excitement for him, when at this moment the nurse returned with the Chaplain, who had desired to be called on her arrival. Kindly Mr. Burke thanked Mary for so promptly coming, more especially as Will desired much (as well as other sick men in the ward, whom Mr. Burke had prepared) to receive the Holy Sacrament. Gladly Mary accepted this privilege, and, kneeling by the side of Will’s bed, prayed silently for the living and the dying, whilst Mr. Burke prepared for the reverent celebration of the Holy Communion.

When that most beautiful of blessings—the Communion one—had been given, and Mary had risen from her knees, she stretched out her hand to Will to wish him a silent farewell. Her

heart was too full for words. He understood her feeling, raised her hand to his lips, and said only, 'Through redeeming blood Will hopes to stand also at the golden gate, to welcome you to glory.'

As Mr. Burke accompanied Mary down the long corridor, she was much touched to learn how Will had known where to send for her. Once in old days, when setting him his week-day Bible lesson, she had no marker, and had taken an envelope from her pocket, on which was her London address, and put it in the Bible at the chapter he had to learn. Will had ever kept it; when she left Persham he had put a ribbon at the back of it, and to the day of his early death had used it as his Bible marker. Both Bible and marker are now in Miss Somers's possession, and I doubt whether she would change the yellow soiled envelope for a jewelled order from a crowned head.

Mary never saw Will again alive, but as she stood by his inanimate corpse the following day and saw the sweet smile which rested on his face, she felt sure that his prayer had been

granted, and that he, through the Saviour's blood, *was* in glory.

‘Go to glory!’ This was Wild Will’s prayer. So to live, so to die, that at last he also might enter also through the pearly gates, and see the King in His beauty, God in His glory, the Lamb on the white throne, the martyrs with their palm crowns, the redeemed with their golden harps; sinners saved, clothed in their white robes—the multitude that no man can number, all joining the hallelujah chorus of ‘Worthy the Lamb who hath redeemed us.’

And to see this, and to join in this, and be one of the angelic host, Will desired and prayed.

Friends, are you also desiring this? If so, remember Will’s prayer: ‘Give me of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may learn to please Thee on earth, to live with Thee in glory.’ Will had learnt the great truth, that without holiness no man can please the Lord, and so he asked God to give him of the Holy Spirit. He knew of himself he could do no good thing, so he prayed for the Spirit to teach him to please God.

Now, dear friends, just ask yourselves—for I cannot answer the questions for you—have you learnt Will's lessons, first to ask Jesus to blot out your past sins? Then have you learnt to desire to please God, by acts of kindness, words of love, and a life of holiness and patience? Have you learnt that to lead this life you must pray like Will: 'Give me of Thy Holy Spirit, give me of Thy strength, give me of Thy light, without which I cannot please Thee?'

Then have you this reason in your heart for wishing to serve God, that you may see the King in His beauty, and enter glory? And what is glory? I saw once as a child our beloved Queen enter London, with the French Emperor and Empress with her. Shouts of ten thousand free English men and women and children rent the air. It was a glorious sight, but that was not glory.

I have heard on an Easter morn seven or eight thousand adoring worshippers join in the Easter hymn and Hallelujah chorus. That was a glorious sight and sound. But it was not

glory. I have seen the sun set in golden brightness, changing the blue lake to a sea of fire, and tinging snowy mountain-tops with a rosy pink. That was a glorious sight, but it was not glory. You may ask me, friends, Then, what is glory? When shall we see it? Nay, friends, I cannot tell you what *is* glory, for 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.' Only will I pray with Will,—

Jesus, blot out my sins! God, give me of Thy grace! that I may so please Thee that hereafter I (and all you, dear friends,) may enter into glory.

THE RAILWAY GUARD.

JOHN WILLIAMS's father was a farmer in Devonshire, and lived not far from the ruins of Berry Pomeroy. For many generations—Williams used to say for many hundred years—his family had owned (not rented) the same land. The large, red Devonshire cattle that grazed on its rich pasturage belonged to him ; the apple orchards, beauteous in early spring with their pink and white blossom, and in autumn laden with the many-coloured fruit, from the rosy red-cheek to the golden cat's-eye, with its big black spots, were owned by him. No cider fetched a higher price in the market than those barrels which were marked ' Williams's Berry Pomeroy.'

Then, his wife's clouted cream and dairy produce never reached a London shop, but

was always in demand at Torquay and Exeter by those who knew their excellences.

Thus Williams was a prosperous, well-to-do man, though his farm was not a large one. He had married late in life, and had but two children—John the firstborn, the darling of his mother ; and his daughter Cicely, born some years later than John.

The farmer was in one sense a kind and even indulgent husband and father, but yet he made the home an unhappy one, for he had generally a grievance on the stocks, and the unfortunate delinquent, the cause of this grievance, would be told of it again and again, till a fresh trouble cropped up to take the place of the former one.

Fortunately, Mrs. Williams's patience was inexhaustible, and this was a constant surprise to her son, as the boy's face would become red with suppressed passion whenever he heard his father what he used to call 'going on at mother.' He was a fine, healthy, high-spirited lad, and many an anxious thought it gave the mother, wondering how the grumbling father and her treasure-boy would agree and get on together if

God took her from earth's unrest to heaven's rest. But this anxiety, like every other trouble, the good woman took on her knees to God, and in telling it to her Father, found peace for her heart.

It was a summer evening, and the farmer had been more wearing even than usual, over and over again harping on that day's grievance, that his wife by accident had not sent enough cider to the men in the hayfield. As the vexed man left the room, the gentle wife sat down on the settee by the open window, into which the myrtle, with its fragrant white blossom, and fuchsia, with its crimson flowers, were peeping. A tired, worn look was on her face, when the boy came up to his mother's side, and, putting his strong, firm hand into her thin one, said, 'I cannot think, mother dear, how you can be so patient, and put up with father, when he is so aggravating. I feel in such a passion with him when he goes on like that at you. I should speak out at once and tell him what I thought, but that I know how it would pain you.'

'Don't say that, John,' replied the mother.

‘It is wrong to speak so of father; and besides, I will show you where I learn to be patient.’

So saying, she rose, went to the shelf where she kept her books, and taking down her—not, as in many cottages, dust-covered, but—well-worn Bible, opened it, and read out to John, ‘In patience possess ye your souls.’ Then she added, ‘My lad, to possess a thing is to keep it fast; to hold it as your very own, which no one has a right to take from you; just as you possess my photograph, which I gave you on your birthday. If the soul possesses patience, it possesses the very same treasure, the same spirit, that made our Lord Jesus not only patient when reviled, but which gave Him strength to work without ceasing, suffer without a murmur, and forgive seventy times seven.’ Then putting her arm round the boy, and drawing him still closer to her, she paused till she had turned to another marked passage in the Book of Life, and read out, ‘He being dead, yet speaketh.’ ‘Do not look grave, darling, at these words,’ continued the loving mother, seeing the pained look on John’s face. ‘Life and death are in

God's hands, and the young leaf may fall whilst the yellow one yet clings to the bough ; but humanly speaking, I shall be resting whilst you are left to fight the good fight. So will you promise me, John, that by God's help (and it is only by God's help that you can keep the promise) that you will pray and watch, that in patience you may possess your soul ? Promise me this, John ; and then, if God does take me, *I* also, being dead, may yet speak to my son.'

'Mother,' answered the lad, in a low, subdued, but firm tone, 'God helping me, I will learn to possess patience.' Something more Mrs. Williams was going to add, when the father's entrance prevented then any further conversation on the subject, but the mother's word sank down into the deep, rich soil of the boy's heart, to bring forth hereafter fruit a hundredfold.

Once again only, parent and child spoke of this patience, and this is how it happened. Months passed, and the watching mother observed how the young lad was, as a good soldier of Christ, drilling himself into patience, practising its exercise, adopting it as his watchword ;

but on one occasion, when the elder Williams had been more aggravating than usual, grumbling at some imaginary forgetfulness of the son, John at supper could bear it no longer, but sharply answered his father, and rose as if to leave the room ; then seeing his mother's astonished, grieved look, he turned back, went up to his father's side, frankly holding out his hand and saying, 'I beg your pardon, father, for speaking so improperly. I ought not to have done so. I hope you will forgive me ;' and then, with flushed cheek, returned and took his place at table.

The happy glance of approbation Mrs. Williams gave the boy amply rewarded him for his self-control.

The Sunday succeeding this scene, the mother called John to her bed-room, and pointing to a new Bible that lay open on the table, told him to accept it as her gift for his conduct that previous evening, and to read out to her the two texts on the title-page. The first was, 'Let patience have her perfect work.' The second, '*She* being dead yet speaketh.'

Then the good woman laid her hand on the boy's shoulder, and said, 'John, you know why I have written the last verse ; we have spoken of that before, but I must say a few words on the first. Let patience have her perfect work. It is not enough to possess patience to-day, and let it slip to-morrow ; hold it in the morning to lose it ere sunset ; but patience should have her perfect work, until patience is no longer needed in the perfect joy and bliss of heaven.'

Two years after this conversation Mrs. Williams died ; but *she*, being dead, yet spoke to the affectionate heart of the lad. Daily did he pray for God's blessed Spirit to water the words she had sown there, and the prayer was answered, strength was given him, and patient he became to his father, patient to his little sister, patient to all about him.

But sorely was the young lad tried, for from the day the gentle mistress was carried from the home at the farm to be laid at rest in the churchyard, all seemed to go down hill with old Williams. The cattle plague broke out amongst the beasts. Some of the oxen and

cows died of it, others had to be slaughtered, the dairy was closed, one farming man after another had to be discharged, their expenses being more than the Williams could bear.

Weary years were these to John, four weary years (at least, the neighbours said they must be so), but never a complaint or murmur passed his lips. Early and late he toiled in the fields, and in the evening, instead of resting, he taught his little sister Cicely, to save the expense of her schooling. But whilst John's worldly prospects were sinking low, higher and higher rose his character amongst rich and poor, and none ever spoke of the young farmer of Berry Pomeroy without respect. At last a climax came to the trouble at the farm. Whether the act of an incendiary or an accident none ever knew, but one night a fire broke out. A hay-rick was in flames; a strong wind was blowing, and spread them from hay-stack to corn-rick, from corn-rick to barn, from barn to farm-buildings, and ere morn awakened heaps of ashes and charred wood proclaimed the farmer a ruined man. But old Williams lay unconscious of the calamity that

had fallen upon him ; the sight of the blazing farmstead had been too much for the old man ; he had been seized by a paralytic stroke, and in the room where, years gone by, he had led his wife as bride, and where his children had been born to him, his own life was fast ebbing away.

A week later and he was laid beside his wife in the churchyard at Berry Pomeroy.

Young Williams and his sister now found themselves not only orphans, but penniless ones. The old farmer had (as times got hard, and money grew scarce) neglected to pay up the fire insurance, and the policy had lapsed ; not a penny could be obtained from that source. The farm could not be worked without stock and without building, and John had not money either to buy one or rebuild the other. There was naught to do but to sell—sell the farm that had been theirs from father to son for so many generations—sell the old home, and be homeless. Meanwhile the mother's teaching was bearing fruit, she being dead yet spoke. Never did a complaint arise on John's lips, nor

a murmur against God shadow his thoughts or true heart. Once when a young companion made (in his hearing) some hard remark on God, John checked it immediately, saying, 'It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good. The God of my mother's trust does all things well.' Still it did cost him many a heart-pang when the *Western News*, and other local papers, announced in their columns the coming sale of the well-known farm near Berry Pomeroy; many a heart-pang to see the big yellow placards on the gate-posts round which he had formerly so often guided the fine team of strong farm horses; many a bitter heart-pang that the farmhouse furniture must also be parted with.

His mother's chair, and a few more relics of her he loved so well, he carefully packed for a neighbour to take care of till better days should come, and he should have again a home wherein to place them. His sister Cicely he sent to pass a week at Newton Abbots, to spare her the sorrow of seeing the house dismantled,

and then was left alone with his patient-borne great grief.

If there are two words in Scripture more comforting than others—two words to prove that Christ is very man as well as very God—two words to teach that He can be touched by the feelings of our infirmities, *because* He was a *Man* of sorrow, acquainted with grief—two words to show how perfect Godhead in His manhood was wrung by human feeling, it is those words, ‘Jesus wept!’ and as He, the loving, tender Jesus, was not ashamed of tears, neither was John, as the last evening at the farm he went to take a farewell of his mother’s room.

How often had he played there in childhood, prayed there in boyhood at his mother’s side. Now the pale moonbeams fell on the bare walls and uncarpeted oak floor of the dismantled room. All looked as desolate as his own heart. Then, throwing himself on his knees by the window-sill, the strong young man shook with long-suppressed and violent grief. But calm

came back with prayer, and the prayer took the form of his mother's heart-treasured words : ' Lord, give me of Thy Holy Spirit, that so strengthened, in me patience may have her perfect work, until patience is no longer needed, in a heaven of perfect bliss and joy. Hear me, for Jesu's sake. Amen.'

At an early hour the following day the farm was crowded with people ; some came out of curiosity, others to purchase. After a spirited bidding, the farm was knocked down to Sir Markworth Fortescue, one of the most justly loved landowners in Devonshire.

The sale over, the baronet's steward called Williams aside, and told him he had had orders from his master to buy the farm at any price, to outbid all bidders, that Sir Markworth had just ridden over, and was waiting to speak to John in the little parlour.

On entering it, the baronet went up to Williams, cordially shaking him by the hands, and told him how much he had won the respect of all the neighbourhood, of all classes, by his conduct under trying circumstances, and then

he added, 'I was determined to buy the farm, Williams, for though I cannot, and should not think it right to bind my successors, if ever in my lifetime you wish to, and can afford to buy back the old homestead, you shall have it, John, at a fair, and, I hope, easy price. And to help you to make your fortune,' said Sir Markworth, smiling, 'I solicited, and I have this morning heard that I have obtained, for you an appointment as railway guard on the Great Northern Railway.' There is a silence that speaks more eloquently than words, and the Baronet felt this, as the young farmer (or, as we must call him for the future, the railway guard) stood, unable to trust his voice to thank Sir Markworth. After a moment's pause, he said, struggling to subdue his emotion, 'To-day, I cannot, indeed never, can I thank you for your goodness; but I will try and live my gratitude, and prove myself worthy of your kindness. You have given hope, and so fresh life to my life, for the future. My great object will be to earn and to save, and so, God helping me, to avail myself of your generous promise, and at

some future time to buy back the farm.' Did some foreshadowing thought of the dangers of the railway guard's life pass before John, as he added (more as if unconsciously speaking out loud to himself than to the Baronet), 'But if God wills otherwise, His will be done.'

There was another pause, and then, as if carried away by the feeling he could not control, Williams continued, his manly voice trembling,—

'I, being poor, can never repay you, Sir Markworth, your kindness, your goodness, but daily will I pray God that He, the All-powerful, will pay my debt, and bless you and your house with all His best blessings.'

The scene was getting painful to both parties, so the Baronet, again putting out his hand, shook cordially that of the railway guard, saying, 'You carry away, John, my best wishes, as well as my respect; and if ever you need a friend, remember you will find one in me.'

And so the new possessor and the old owner of the farm parted, never to meet on earth

again, for ere the day of John's dire need had come, the Baronet was dead, and another king arose that knew not Joseph. And now we must quickly pass over the next seven years of Williams's career. Even happily they flew by, as, full of life, vigour, and life-hope, he fulfilled the duties of his new position.

His sole anxiety was for his sister, whom he had apprenticed out to a dressmaker at Derby. Her health could not bear close confinement after her early life of fresh air and exercise, so she had to leave the business and take a situation at Lord Ramsden's.

This was a regret to John, as he felt how precarious was his own life as a railway guard; and he had wished to have taken of his savings to set Cicely up in business, where she could earn more money, and live in a more independent position than in service.

And now came the days when the mother's prayers were to be answered, though not in the way she would have desired for her darling son. Patience was to have her perfect work in him, but it was to be perfected as in the great

Captain of our salvation 'through suffering.'

It was at the latter end of June, and John, as guard, had charge that day of the Scotch express, when, nearing Doncaster, he saw porters shunting a truck that could not possibly be got off the line before reached by the train. Firemen and enginemen all saw the danger, and jumped off the engine, but John did not follow their example. His duty was to stay at his post, and do his best to save the lives of those intrusted to him; so putting down the strong brake, he happily sufficiently checked the speed of the train to prevent the end carriages being overturned, but, unhappily, not enough to prevent a collision. With a crash, engine, tender, and guard-van, were crushed in and broken up to a thousand splinters.

When Williams was extricated from the broken van, it was found that his leg was so frightfully shattered that amputation at the ankle was immediately necessary. When Cicely, a few days later, entered the ward, and saw her brother lying there, in all the full flush

of manhood, but maimed and crippled for life, she could not speak for tears. With that tender, protecting voice, with which John ever addressed the young girl, he answered her grief by saying, 'Nay, Cicely, you must not grieve; God is a God that heareth prayer: and many and many a time has mother prayed that I might learn the great and difficult lesson in patience to possess my soul; and so our Father has granted her petition, not, perhaps, quite in the way poor mother would have chosen for me, but the way best to learn how to let patience have her perfect work.'

Not weeks, but weary months, did John lay in that hospital ward, for to save his life, a second operation was found necessary, high above the knee. When the nurse was bending over him that evening, gently whispering praise for his uncomplaining patience, the faint words passed his lips, '*She* being dead yet speaketh.' Yes; it was thoughts of the lesson taught that summer-tide, with his mother's arms passed round him, that gave John strength to be patient now.

When Williams was sufficiently recovered to leave the hospital, he was sent for by the Board of Directors, when the Chairman offered him, as a reward for his gallant conduct, either a present of a hundred pounds, did he wish to leave their service, or permission to continue in it as guard at an increase of salary. John chose the latter ; and again the hope revived that he might yet be spared to win back the old home. Again hope blossomed, only to be for ever blighted.

Sixteen months later, when the wintry wind was blowing, and the Baltic was frozen over, and in dear old England blazing fires glowed on hearths at Christmas-tide, Williams was again guard of the train running north.

It was near midnight. The snow had been falling all that day, with a drifting wind, when (about twenty miles from Grantham) the heavy-laden train came to a dead lock : the one engine had not power to force it further through the snow-drift. There was naught else to do but disengage the engine and send it on (without the weight of the carriages) to Grantham,

with the request that a second engine might be sent them, and that the station-master would telegraph up and down the line to stop trains and so prevent them running into them.

The guard, of course, could not stay in his van, whilst coming danger might be both before and behind; so taking his lamp, with the danger red signal, John walked up and down in front of the train, whilst the other guard did the same in the rear. The night was too dark to see a yard before him, save only where the red glare of the lamp fell, and was reflected on earth's white covering. The wind shook with mournful sound the long telegraph wires, making the snow on them fall heavily to the ground.

It was a strange fact, but one which John often mentioned to Mary Somers in after years, that as he thus paced to and fro, keeping watch that winter night, memory conjured up (as if in mockery) every warm, glowing summer scene of early childhood.

Again was he in Devon's grassy mead, in his first hayfield, where the mother was making the toddling, merry child a house amidst the hay-

cocks. Again he stood amid the harvest's golden corn, in his cotton pinafore, red poppies, and the blue corn-flowers, and in his tiny hands the ears of wheat he had gleaned to take home and 'make maminy bread.' Then Williams began to calculate how long it might be ere he could lay aside enough to purchase back the farm and wander again amongst those old familiar haunts.

Dreams, John!—idle, bright dreams! Never will you visit them again on earth. Your little earnings will melt away, like the late snow of April before the warm spring sun; for that night of exposure to the bitter north blast brought on a sort of neuralgia in all John's nerves, especially in the amputated limb; and again for months he lay in the Doncaster hospital, only to be removed from it to the one at Buxton.

When Mary Somers there made John's acquaintance, he had lain on that bed of intense suffering for more than a year. At first he had been admitted at Buxton on a letter of recommendation, and again and again it had been renewed; and when that could be no longer done, he was permitted to stay on paying for his maintenance.

For this, he had been obliged to take from those savings with which he had so hoped to purchase back the old farm, and even these savings were now well-nigh exhausted.

But, whether bowed with bodily pain or heart anguish, no murmur ever passed his lips. Patience did indeed in him have its perfect work, and sorely it was tried. Gradually a want of moving power was creeping over nerve and limb, though both were often racked with agony.

The first day that Mary stood by his bedside, the flies of a hot August day were tormenting him, and his poor folded hands were powerless, helpless to drive away his tormentors, or wipe the beaded perspiration from off his pale forehead ; but a look of calm patience rested on his wasted face.

From that hour a warm friendship sprung up between Mary and John ; to none save her did he ever speak of the Devonshire home or past days, but it always seemed to soothe him to talk to Mary of his mother. At last, Mary had to leave for Italy. It was a painful parting, as the doctors did not think that it was possible that he

could survive till her return the following summer. She had collected from friends some pounds for him, which she calculated would more than pay his hospital expenses, and leave a surplus for little comforts. So having, as she thought, provided for his earthly support, she could only commend him to the God of all comfort, who had hitherto so supported him under suffering, and pray that, if not on earth, they might meet in heaven.

The swallow had again returned from the sunny south, the dragon-fly, with long gauzy wing, was darting from flower to flower, when Mary the following year rang again at the Buxton Hospital to inquire after Williams. She expected to hear that God had taken him from suffering to glory, but was grieved and shocked to learn that he was living indeed, but it was now as a pauper in Chapel-le-Frith Workhouse.

Thither Mary started by the next train. On arriving at the Union she asked the excellent and kind matron to allow her to go to John alone, as she feared the meeting would be a sad one. On entering into the little room where he lay,

no sign of recognition passed over John's face. 'John,' said Mary, gently, 'are you not glad to see me? have you forgotten me?'

At the sound of her well-known voice, the poor ex-railway guard burst into tears, and from between half-closed lips whispered, 'I can't see you, but I am glad to hear your voice again.'

Yes, disease had done its work; the eyelids were powerless, and could not open, and the poor lips could with difficulty utter a few half-pronounced words.

Yes, there, in the bleak exposed Union, on the border of the Derbyshire moor uplands, lay Williams, life just flickering in the half-dead, crippled frame,—he who had once been the vigorous, prosperous farmer of balmy Devonshire. And not by sin or shame was he thus brought low, but by the inscrutable ways of that God whom John still acknowledged and worshipped as a loving Father.

The excellent master and mistress of the Union, like the equally kind master and mistress of the Buxton Hospital, all loved Williams, as never did a murmur pass his lips. Gratitude

and love to God and man possessed his soul, and as Mrs. Hill the matron told Mary, faith and patience never failed him.

By the kind leave of the rector, for the next six months Mary spent every Sunday at Chapel-le-Frith. His was the first room she entered, the last she quitted when the western sun used to creep into John's room, and warn her it was what the ex-guard used to call train time for her to return to Buxton.

Before leaving she would always sit down by his bed, when he would falter out the words, 'Sing, Missy ;' and then through his room would float Mary's voice as, in a subdued note, she would sing his favourite hymn, only changing the word 'loyal' for 'patient,' and this is what she sang :—

' Oh, Paradise ! oh, Paradise !
Who doth not crave for rest ?
Who would not seek that happy land
Where they that loved are blest ?
Where patient hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.

- ‘ Oh, Paradise ! oh, Paradise !
It’s weary waiting here ;
I long to be where Jesus is,
To feel, to see Him near.
Where patient hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God’s most holy sight.
- ‘ Oh, Paradise ! oh, Paradise !
I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord,
In love, prepares for me.
Where patient hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God’s most holy sight.
- ‘ Lord Jesu, King of Paradise !
Oh keep me in Thy love,
And guide me to that happy land
Of perfect rest above,
Where patient hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God’s most holy sight.’

And as Mary sang on she could see how Williams’ heart followed the verses, and a glow would pass over his pain-worn features at the words,

‘ I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord,
In love, prepares for me.’

The hymn finished, Mary would shake hands, doubting whether she would again sing it to poor John, or whether ere another week had passed he would not have entered ‘ the special place Jesus had prepared for him ;’ but though still lower and lower in the socket, life did flicker on.

Again another parting, for Miss Somers had, as in previous years, to winter abroad ; but wherever she now was, Mary sent monthly to John his chatty letter, with the little allowance she gave him.

At last she received from the good matron the long-expected tidings that Williams’ patient spirit had passed away to where patience would be no more needed, in a land of perfect bliss and joy. Her last letter arrived just after he breathed his last, and was laid on his breast to be buried with him, as well as all the rest of her letters, which he treasured and kept under his pillow. From her little annuity he put by

monthly a trifle to meet the expenses of his funeral, as he shrank from being laid to rest by the parish authorities.

Six months later, and Mary again stood in that now untenanted room (where she had so often sat by Williams' bed), to hear from Mrs. Hill particulars of the closing scene. 'I do not think he was quite himself at the last, miss,' said the kind-hearted, weeping woman, 'for we saw his poor lips moving, and we bent down over him to try and understand what he said, for we thought he wished to send some message to you, but he seemed to say, "She being dead, has *ever* spoken, no need of patience *now*," and then one convulsion passed over him, and his sufferings were over. We could not understand what he meant, Miss Somers ; perhaps we did not rightly hear.' To Mary, who knew his past life, how eloquent and touching were his last words !

Miss Somers turned to leave, asking at what part of the churchyard she should find the grave.

'I wish my husband was at home to direct

you,' answered Mrs. Hill, 'or to have gone with you to show it you, for though Williams was buried at his own expense, it is a parish grave, and no stone marks it; but it is the fourth or fifth mound from the big granite slab surrounded with rails.'

Mary passed down the village, and entered the quiet churchyard; she easily found the big granite slab. Pompous records of the dead buried beneath were recorded on it. He had been a J.P., and had married an heiress from the Hall, and had been Colonel of the Militia. Miss Somers could read no more, but began to count the green mounds (on which a few tall autumn daisies were showing their white stars), to find Williams's grave; then, standing between the fourth and fifth, she felt that one of the two must be John's resting-place, that she must be looking on where he slept in peace.

The voices of the children died away from the village street as they took shelter in their homes from the now falling rain. The thick mist of a passing shower blotted out the surrounding scenery, and fell like a veil to curtain John's grave. The rain falling heavily, in

large drops pattered with a dull sound, on the neighbouring big granite slab; but they fell noiselessly on the mossy turf of the Guard's nameless grave.

Fast as nature's fell Mary's tears, as she stood there. Not a stone to mark where John waited the second coming of his Lord. At first a longing seized her to raise herself some record to him. Then a moment later she exclaimed aloud, as if speaking to him, 'No, John, no; I would not if I could. Christ has said of His sheep, "I know them," and they who sleep in Jesus will He bring with Him. Your poor maimed, shattered body lies here, sown in corruption; but you, old friend, are not here, but where—

“Patient hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through,
In God's most holy sight.”

The shower had ceased, the mist had parted, and as Mary repeated those lines, so often sung to John, a sunbeam burst from forth the drifting clouds, and fell on the nameless grave, whilst the big granite slab yet lay in shadow.

Ere Mary turned away from the spot, with folded hands and dimmed eyes, she prayed that God would give her also of His Spirit, that in patience she might possess her soul, that in her patience might have its perfect work, that she might — washed by Christ's redeeming blood — meet John in that land where in perfect bliss and joy patience is no longer needed.

Dear friends, does this tale say nought to you? Does it not rather ask, Are you letting patience have her perfect work? Are you 'patient towards all men?' Are you with a kind word answering many a rough one? Are you, by kind acts, softening many a hard heart? Have you that loving patience which bears, believes, hopes, endures, all things, without which we are nothing in the sight of God? This is patience towards man. Above all, have you, like the railway guard, patience towards God? or do you murmur and rebel against Him when sickness, and sorrow, and poverty come to you? I know too well myself it is hard to be patient at these times; we think

God has forgotten us ; but in these dark hours, say with the Psalmist, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope thou still in God,' and 'though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' Let patience have her perfect work. Strive for it. Pray for it. Then, when that better home is reached, where sorrow and suffering are past for ever, then shall we rejoice that in patience we possessed our souls, and endured to the end.

Friends, may you and I, through redeeming blood, enter that

‘ Home of fadeless splendour,
Of flowers that have no thorn,
Where they shall dwell as children,
Who here in patience mourn.

‘ Where they who, with their Leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white.

‘ Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest !’

THE LOSS

OF THE

TWO STEAMERS.

It was that evening hour when the western sky becomes mouse-colour ; the glory of the setting sun gone ; the warm red glow faded, and the brown hue reigning till the cold grey of night creeps on and usurps its place.

Captain Parker was sitting on the beach at Eastbourne, watching all these varied and varying changes, and near him was a fine weather-beaten old tar, mending his boat ; and as the man knocked in a nail here, and a nail there, Captain Parker heard him mutter to himself, ‘ Well, I do wonder, now, who made the first boat ; I dare say she was a queer thing to look at.’

‘ My friend,’ said Captain Parker, turning

round from looking at the sky to look at the old sailor, 'I can tell you all about her, and who built her, and the name of the master builder, and how long she was on the stocks, and what she was made of, and her cargo, and how many men she had to man her.'

'Nay, Captain, nay,' said the old salt-water; 'now you are a-chaffing me. I know you are a learned man, but sure you cannot tell me all that about the first boat.'

'But I can, Peter,' replied Captain Parker; 'and I know also she was pitched and caulked, within as well as without, to resist the worst storm the world ever saw, and such as it will never see again.'

'And was she a good safe boat, sir, for weathering such a storm? Did she gallantly ride it out, and bring her crew safe to port? If it is not too bold to ask, will you tell me where you learnt about her?'

'Aye, Peter, that will I. Is not the first boat we read of, the ark built by Noah? Do we not read in the Bible that God gave Noah the size of it, told him to build it of shittim-wood?

Was not the crew, Noah and his family, and the cargo, the male and female of all the known beasts ?’

‘Right, Captain,’ said Peter, ‘and I never thought of that before. But the Bible is a wonderful book, sir ; we may read it again and again, and every time we take it up find a fresh lesson in it.’

‘I am glad to hear you say that,’ answered the Captain, ‘and I seldom read of the Deluge without thinking what a difference there must be in the happy feelings of Noah, who knew that the All Pure saved his family, because he was a God-fearing, God-obeying man, and those who saw wives and children swept away to death before their eyes, homes destroyed, and knew that their own sins and iniquities had helped, each one, to bring on this destruction, had helped to make other men as vile as themselves, that their lives and their examples had been a curse instead of a blessing to all about them.’

‘It is indeed a fearful thought, Captain Parker ; and if you knew my own history, you

would see how much reason I have to feel the truth of what you are saying.'

'Will you tell it me, Peter?' asked the Captain. 'I should much like to hear it : only before you begin your story, there is only one remark more I want to make, and that is—Do you remember how, when Noah and his family came out of the ark, they made a sacrifice to God, to thank Him, and to show their gratitude to Him who had preserved them so many long months in the ark? Now, Peter, how few of us follow their example ! When saved from death, in sickness on land, or storm at sea, or in any other danger, how few remember to return thanks in church to God for all His goodness to us and the children of men ! Do we not rather forget, and neglect His benefits ?'

'Aye, sir, that is just what Mr. Nutt, our Brixham clergyman, used to say to us, and you will see by my tale how badly it ended with those of us who forgot to, or would not, thank the Father of all mercies, for past mercies shown by Him to them. And now, sir, I will spin you my yarn as briefly as I can ; only you know,'

added Peter, laughing, 'a sailor never can steer his tale straight ahead, but goes tacking backwards and forward with it: so when my tongue goes too much out of its track, I must ask you, Captain Parker, to sing out, "Steady!"'

'Agreed,' said the Captain. So, taking his place by Captain Parker's side, Peter began his tale, whilst the silence of a summer night, broken only by the gentle murmur of the waves breaking on the shore, stole over land and sea.

'Harry Rogers and I were Brixham lads. Both our fathers were fishermen; both (like their sons) had been friends from early childhood; both, the same week, had brought their brides to their cottage homes, which stood side by side one another, looking over Torbay.

'Now, sir, the Brixham fishermen do not go out generally, like others, only just short trips to fish for a few hours, coast-fishing in the bay, but will go out with their boats for weeks and almost months together, up as far as Yarmouth and the east coast of England, or even as far as Scotland, for herring and other fishing, which they

pickle down, and thus sometimes they are away from home all the spring and summer. During these long trips Rogers and I always accompanied our fathers, but the winter months they were most particular that we attended school regularly, allowing no shirking, or playing truant, for they used to say book-learning was a fine thing, and helped to get a man on in the world; and they said true, Captain Parker, and I hope soon every child in England will be forced to go to school, but book-learning is not all. "For what shall it profit if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Our poor parents forgot the text, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy understanding; and in our family none knew the value of a soul, or the worth of a Saviour, but my mother's mother, who lived in a cottage on the Peighton Road. There are certain sounds and smells, Captain, that to me always recall certain sights and people. I never stand by a bed of blue lavender, with its narrow sea-green leaves, and the bees humming amongst its flowers, without then thinking of that good old

woman, with her little white mob-cap, who would take me by the hand as a child to the sweet bed and say, "The first-fruits and best of everything we have we ought to give to God, Peter; so I shall pick my best and first lavender to lie in the drawer between my big Bible and Prayer-book. I have but these sweet flowers to offer Him, laddie, but you have all the first sweetness of a young life, offer that to Him, and remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days draw nigh.'

'Mr. Nutt also, our Brixham clergyman, he who wrote pretty hymns, did his best to make us God-fearing, Christ-loving, Spirit-seeking lads, like many thousand clergymen in dear old England, whose labours ought to make our Church so dear to every true Englishman's heart. He taught, he prayed, he laboured, he strove to sow good seed in our hearts; but after all, the clergy are but like the Sower in the Parable, they can but broadcast the seed, and if there is no harvest in return, we ought not to complain of the quality of the seed, or of the sower, but of the ground

on which it fell. Now with Rogers the seed fell on real stony, bad ground, with me on soft ; but then wild, loose, dissolute companions were like the fowls of the air who picked up the seed before it took root in my heart.

‘Mr. Nutt was beloved by all his parish, but he was just adored by the fishermen ; he used to call himself, in joke, Admiral of the Brixham fishing fleet, and before it started on its long summer cruise he always, year after year, held a special service in church for all the fishermen going to sea, and for their families who were going to stay at home ; all were specially invited to attend. There was a prayer used for the safety of those going to sea, and a sermon, then he gave to all the fishermen who had not a Bible and Prayer-book one of both, with their names written inside. And then, in autumn, on the return of ‘his Fleet,’ Mr. Nutt had another service, a thanksgiving one. Thus many a farewell and many a thanksgiving service have we two lads heard from Mr. Nutt, but not one bit did we care for them ; we liked what we

called the lark of a holiday, but our souls were unthought of, our Bibles unprized.

‘And do you now value them, Peter?’ interrupted Captain Parker.

‘Aye, aye, sir, that do I. My Bible is my compass to guide, my rudder to steer, my chart when wandering out of the way; and I trust it may be my sheet-anchor of hope in the hour of death. Well, sir, after a bit, Rogers and I got tired of a fishing life, or rather of the control of home, so we agreed that, as we were too great chums to be separated, we would ship together in a large steamer that ran from Southampton to Jersey. Did you ever see Jersey, sir? It is as pretty an island as ever I saw. There is the old ruined castle of Mont Orgueil, and every cottage and villa stands in a very Eden of sweet flowers, and the beautiful yucca plant, so rarely seen in England, grows there. The falling white bell-flowers blossom in thick clusters round the stem. I heard a young lady once on board our steamer say to her lover, as she held a branch in her hand he had given her, “Oh, you ought not to pick the yucca. It is the

fairies' belfry, where they ring out their wedding peals for their tiny weddings." I thought, as I looked at the pretty white bells of the flower, she was nearly right.

'But beautiful as Jersey looks, it is an awful place for a man's soul. Many a one gets shipwrecked there. There is no excise duty on wine and spirits, and so the drunkenness is awful; and as drunkenness generally leads to other vices, bad low company, and swearing, what I have seen at St. Helier's, as the chief port is called—why the women are lower than the animals, and the men worse than the brute beasts. Bad as Rogers and I had been at Brixham, we became the worst of the worst at St. Helier's, he the leader, I the follower. I think I have not yet told you Rogers was one of the very handsomest men I ever saw—strong-built, broad-chested, with a long soft beard of the brown hue of a ripe horse-chestnut, laughing blue eyes, and that devil-may-care manner that unhappily is so taking with many women and even men; for it is a fact, sir, for which I never could account, but in our class of life looks

have immense power over us men. How, or why, I could never understand, but I simply know, that if a handsome, dare-devil sailor gets rated on a ship's books, he will get, for good or ill, an influence over the men which few can resist. And so it was with Rogers. Unfortunately, few women or men ever said him nay ; and as for me, his will was mine. After a time Rogers and I got short leave to go to Brixham to see our families. I don't think, sir, we looked the better for the lives we had been leading at Jersey, for drunkenness and other degrading vices usually set their stamp on a man's face, and mark into whose service he has enlisted.

‘One day, as we were lounging up the road outside Brixham, we met the clergyman, Mr. Nutt.

‘“Good day, lads,” he said kindly, stopping us. “Where have you been lately? it is a long time since I have seen you. Do you not belong any longer to my fishing fleet?”

‘“No, sir,” said Rogers, “we do not go fishing any more. Peter and I have shipped together in the *Mary Anne* steamer, that runs between

Southampton and Jersey. We are just like brothers; we never have been, and we should not like to be, separated."

"Well, I do like warm, true friendship," answered Mr. Nutt, "and I hope yours is not only a friendship begun in this life there to end, but one to last through all eternity in heaven. Is it not a solemn thought, lads, that if you two are such friends, you must be leading one another on the road that leads to eternal life, or dragging one another down, down, down—where, Rogers?"

"There was something awfully solemn, sir, in Mr. Nutt's voice as he said this; then he took from his breast-pocket, and opened the Bible he always carried there, and said, "Lads, I am not going to preach a sermon in the highroad, but just listen for one moment to two different sorts of friendship." Then he opened his Bible and read out, "And John the Baptist looking upon Jesus said, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. And one of the two which heard John speak, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, and he

findeth his brother, and saith, We have found the Messiah, which is called Christ, and he brought Peter to Jesus." Now, lads, here is one friendship: when Andrew had found Christ, he went and brought his brother to Jesus; and at the last day, what a happy thought it will be for Andrew, that it was he who brought his own brother to know Jesus, the Saviour of the world, and thus saved his brother's soul alive. Are you two chums leading one another to, or leading one another from Christ? In the Old Testament, 2 Chron. xviii. xix., we read of another sort of friendship. Jehoshaphat, who was generally a God-fearing man, made friends with the most wicked king Ahab; and they went up together to fight against the Syrians, but ever remember God does not bless ungodly friendships. The bad king, Ahab, who had tempted Jehoshaphat to despise the good prophet, lost his life, dying of his wounds, and we are told that Jehoshaphat would also have lost his life, like his wicked friend, but that he cried out to God to help him, and the Lord saved him. We are even further told,

that God was wroth with Jehoshaphat because he had loved one who hated the Lord.

““Lads, lads,” continued Mr. Nutt affectionately, “take care you never lead each other on to death here, death eternal, but choose rather another part, and lead one another to Jesus. Good-bye, and God bless you, lads:” and so saying, he went on his way.

‘We never saw Mr. Nutt again. He was taken ill, sir, went to foreign parts, and died ; but I have reason enough to remember these his last words.

‘That summer our steamer began running on from Jersey to St. Malo, one of the ports and watering-places on the north coast of France. It is a quaint old town, with high walls all round it, and great city gates. The river Rance runs one side of it, dividing it from Dinard, and on the other is the sea ; and when the tide is out there are wide-reaching sands. It is a very dangerous passage, at least it needs careful steering, from Jersey to St. Malo, on account of the many hidden rocks in that part of the channel. Well, sir, I don’t

know how it happened, but once, when we were going full speed, and there was a slight fog, we suddenly struck on one of these rocks, and began to fill. Some of the passengers were so frightened they jumped into the sea ; some stuck to the ship, but all were easily saved, as it was broad daylight, and there were many fishing-boats about, who, seeing our distress, came to our rescue, picking up those in the sea, and taking the rest off the rapidly sinking vessel. You see, sir, we were so easily saved, that it made us make light of the accident and of our deliverance from death, forgetting that had the fog been thicker, or had we struck at night, and therefore not so easily been seen, we should, humanly speaking, have all been lost ; and thus many of us just forgot the God who saved us. The accident was on a Saturday, as we were running over to St. Malo to take passengers to the races there ; for, sad to say, in France all the great and gay amusements are on a Sunday, and you may see the ladies streaming out of the Roman Catholic churches, and even the priests who have been performing high

mass, joining with the throng, and going down in their black soutanes to see the races, which are held on the sands. The next day (Sunday) Rogers and I were sauntering about the pier waiting for low tide and the races to begin, when we met Captain Dixon, a smart officer of the 30th Regiment, which was then stationed at Jersey; he had come over the previous day with us in the steamer that had struck.

“Well, sailors,” he said, stopping us, “are you going to church this morning, you look so smart and neat?”

“No, Captain,” answered Rogers, “that we are *not*, we leave praying to parsons and saints; but Peter and I are going to the races, which will begin as soon as these French people have left their churches.”

“Nay, come with me, my men,” replied Captain Dixon, “instead of going to the races; let us all, together, thank and praise Him who saved us yesterday from death.”

“I treated last evening the fishermen who picked us up, till I left them half drunk under the table at the little cabaret of the Soleil

Lévant, so I have shown my gratitude to those who saved me," replied Rogers with a sneer, for he was awfully profane. "Peter," he added, turning to me, "you can go and say 'Amen' with Captain Dixon if you like it, I'm off to the races," and down the pier he went whistling.

'The devil, sir, seemed to whisper, "Go to the races and be jolly with your chum," whilst conscience said, "Go to the house of prayer and praise with Captain Dixon."

'The young officer saw my hesitation, so laying his hand kindly on my shoulder, said,—

"Peter, come with me. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Blessed is the man who walketh not in the way of sinners. And remember, lad, how Noah, when he came out of the ark, made a sacrifice to thank God for his deliverance. Let us do the same, and offer to a loving Father the acceptable sacrifice of prayer and praise."

'In those days I was what people call easy-going, easily led by the last speaker, to whom I could rarely say "No." So I crossed in the little ferry steamer with Captain Dixon to church,

at the English Consul's house at Dinard, where the Bishop had allowed our service to be held whilst the church was being built.

'I shall never to the end of my life forget that morning. The windows of the room were opened, and the green, broad, fan-like leaves of the Virginian creeper were peeping in, as if to see us at prayers; the swift waters of the Rance were running on to meet the sea, as our own lives to the great ocean of eternity; and the beautiful silvery white leaves of the poplars at the end of the garden were stirred by a June breeze.

'I must run out of my track for a moment, sir, to say that the Bretons have a wonderful lot of queer sayings and superstitions. Some of them are pretty enough, and one of them is about those same aspen poplars. They pretend that the cross on which our blessed Redeemer hung was made from the wood of the aspen-tree, and that it was so shocked at the fact, that its leaves have shaken ever since, and so they call the tree "*Le Tremblé*," which means, they tell me, "*The Trembler*."

‘But to return to those morning prayers. Half the time I was longing to be out of church with Rogers, fearing that he would laugh at me when we met, and half the time my thoughts were with the excellent clergyman and the prayers, for he did not merely read them but prayed them with all his heart. I do not know, Captain Parker, what it was that came over me as I heard him say in the Litany, “In all times of our tribulation, in the hour of death, and day of judgment,” but I know I did say heartily the response “Good Lord, deliver us.” But when the prayers were over I thought there could be no occasion for me to wait for the sermon. So I slipped out, fearing to lose the return ferry steamer to St. Malo, and knowing I could easily find Rogers on the sands.

‘I forgot, sir, one cannot serve two masters—worship God one moment, and do the devil’s work another, and devil’s work indeed are races. Rogers and I saw them that Sunday, only just keeping sober enough to find our way back to the steamer in the evening, for before daybreak we were to start back to Jersey.

'It was exactly one fortnight after this, and again we were running from Jersey to St. Malo. We had a more than usual number of passengers on board, many of them dancing to the spirited tunes of the Scotch quadrilles, which the band was playing (and never do I hear a street one now playing "The bonnie breast-knots," without recalling that scene), when we came near the spot where the first steamer had struck. The vessel had settled down, and nothing was to be seen of her but the top of the black funnel, which the captain of our steamer pointed out to our passengers. Instantly they began begging him to go nearer, just a little nearer; all dancing was forgotten, some coming up from below to see the ill-fated vessel, as they called her. The captain foolishly consented, steered towards the spot of the wreck, when in one instant our vessel struck also on another of these rocks, reeled to and fro like a drunken man, and then began to settle down—oh, my God, how fast!

'I never shall forget that scene, or the heart-rending cries. One caught hold of one

object, another something else, hoping to float on them till we should again be picked up. The few who had remained below in the cabin, and the engine-men, had not time even to rush on deck, but sank with the sinking vessel. One gentleman tied himself to a hen-coop and floated many hours on it, and was picked up insensible, the red sea dyed with his blood from a broken blood-vessel.* When I looked for Rogers he was swimming towards an oar which was not far from him on that still, calm summer sea. I myself was half floating, half resting, on one of the poor musicians' music-stands, when all of a sudden I heard one shriek that thrilled through me. Did you ever hear, Captain Parker, the despairing cry of a strong man in his death agony? If not, I hope you never may, for it is the most awful thing I know. The shriek was from poor Somers as he sank never to rise again; but as he sank I shall never forget his look. It seemed to say, Too late, too late! Horror, despair, misery, were in that dying look, in that dying cry.

* A fact.

‘I again, by God’s great mercy, was picked up some hours later.

‘Perhaps, sir, I was saved in answer to that prayer two short Sundays before, at the church at Dinard, “In the hour of death, good Lord deliver us.”

‘This time, Captain Parker, I did not forget to thank and praise God for all the benefits which He had done unto me ; but Rogers’s face haunts me ever, and sometimes when I’m working here in the stillness of morning or the quiet of night, his last cry will seem to come floating over the sea, and wrings my heart in agony ; for had I paid attention in time to Mr. Nutt’s warning words, perhaps I might (as Andrew did Peter, as the Samaritan woman did her town’s folk) have brought Rogers to a saving knowledge of his Redeemer.

‘Oh ! Captain Parker,’ said poor Peter, in a faltering voice, ‘if I meet him at the great day of judgment, and if I, through Jesu’s soul-cleansing blood, should have my sins blotted out, whilst he is unpardoned,—if we are then separated for all eternity, is not that an awful

thought? for perhaps had I used my influence aright, I might have saved Rogers' soul alive, and not had the life-long grief of mourning over friendship wasted, friendship misused, friendship which linked us so together for ill on earth, but which will not reunite us for an eternity of happiness.'

So saying, as if he wished to be alone with his thoughts, he rose, and wishing Captain Parker good-night, hurried to his home.

Now, dear friends, let me ask each one of you who read this tale, have you had chums in your past lives? have you friends now? are you using your influence (as Andrew did his love for Peter) to lead your friend to Jesus, the Saviour of the world? or are you (as Ahab did Jehoshaphat) leading him away from God, to perhaps death temporal, to certain death eternal? Are you thinking it manly to say to your friend, Come, join with me in the devil's ranks? or are you saying, Come, fight with me as a good soldier of Christ, into whose ranks we were enlisted at baptism, to fight victoriously over sin and the devil? You

cannot possibly serve in the two ranks. Under whose banner will you serve—under the Ruler of darkness, or under the King of glory? As your friend hereafter lies dying, shall he say with curses on his tongue, ‘My soul is lost, but it is you who led me astray; you who showed me the way to sin; it was you who pushed forward the tempting cup?’ Or shall he say, with blessings on his lips, ‘It was you, dear friend, who led me to God; you drew me to a Saviour’s feet; you made me value a Saviour’s blood; you taught me to pray for God’s Holy Spirit, without whose light and strength I could not have pressed on; you urged me to win the golden crown; you led me back when wandering from the narrow way?’

Oh, friends, men, and lads, you may think it manly to be wild, but believe me it is more manly, more courageous, to be steady. It is manly, day after day, hour after hour, to fight against sin; it is manly to be victorious over evil desires; it is manly to say, ‘God is my master, Him will I serve; Christ is my Saviour, Him will I love.’ Again, I say it is cowardly—

rank cowardice—to say, ‘The devils tempt me, so I will yield ; sin tempts me, so I will yield ; my own evil heart tempts me, so I will yield.’ Friends, for the future may we choose Andrew’s part, not only to follow Christ as he did at the bidding of John the Baptist, but, like him, lead those dear to us to Jesus, remembering the promise, that ‘they who win many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.’

TO YOUR HEALTH, PROCTOR.

As it is difficult, dear friends, to understand this tale without knowing the line of country where it is laid, let you and me both take a railway ticket, and travel down to Durham; and then, just as if we were civil engineers going to survey the country for a new railway, we will together go over the ground and scene of the story.

First, let us stop at the old town of Durham, with its steep, narrow, paved streets. Round two sides of the city sweeps the river Weir, up (not down) which, says the old legend, floated the coffin of St. Cuthbert, till it came to the green meadow where the maid was milking her cow. Here the body rested; and, therefore, high on

the cliff above the meadow, they built, in days long past, the beautiful cathedral, where they buried the body, putting a carved cow over the north door, in remembrance of the old monkish story. And there yet stands that grand old building, high above the rapid river ; fit type and emblem of that spiritual Church of Christ, which, founded on a Rock, shall stand fast for ever, whilst beneath and around her flows the stream of human life ; many straws, alas, floating down its current, many a care-laden barge toiling up against the stream, on whose banks young children play amongst wild flowers ; against whose rocks many a boat is shivered ; amongst whose shoals many a skiff is wrecked.

Four miles south of Durham rises a Norman baronial castle, where once had been confined Baliol, King of Scotland, when he was taken prisoner by the English. From its massive walls slopes the garden down to the deer park ; to the south-west of the castle bends the road to Bishop Auckland, through Willington, then a small village ; for I speak of some ten years gone by, ere furnaces darkened the midday sun

with their smoke, and coke-ovens glared out their blaze at night.

To the south-east, with a still greater outward bend, lay the great north road over Sunderland Bridge. Between these two outbending roads were many small hamlets, now pit villages ; many scattered cottages, now the centre of a township. From west to east ran a river. It was not very wide, nor yet very deep ; but it was very dangerous, for its bed of sand was as shifting as that of many a seashore. Here carts and horses have been engulfed, and here many human lives have been lost. When villagers and pitmen going to Durham did not want to take the long round by the great north road, nor yet the shorter but still long route by Willington, they would cross the river at the dangerous (because shifting) ford, then strike across the deer park, and pass between the grand castle and the church, whose graveyard I forgot to name, opened on to the castle sward by a little ivy-covered gate ; and then, once past this point, was a short bye-road that led direct to Durham. This cross-country

track shortened the walk to the town by many miles. As I recall those scenes, how the heart yearns after her who then reigned at the old castle,—whom true, noble, loving friends mourn with a life-long regret, longing for

‘The touch of the vanished hand,
And the voice that now is still.’

But I must not pause over sad memories ; for having made you acquainted with the country, I must further introduce you to the people of our story.

• First to Proctor, one of the most intelligent and respected men at Mr. Dove’s coal-pits, where he acted as one of the head engine men. Now Proctor was a real Christian man ; not thinking to prove his Christianity (like many a self-called one) by sitting in judgment on his neighbours to inquire whether they were Christians or not, but knowing the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, he remembered the command, ‘Examine *yourselves* ;’ and each night, humbly on his knees, *did* examine himself wherein that day he had offended against God and man ; not

slurring over faults committed, but in his honest heart confessing them to his God. And then he would ask his loved Saviour to blot out each fault with His precious blood, and plead for God's Holy Spirit to strengthen him that he might not again fall. If there was one sin Proctor loathed more than another, it was drunkenness, which he used to call father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and ancestor of all shame and crime ; and so, early in life, with this hatred of drunkenness, he had made one strict rule, from which he had never deviated (and unhappy was it, that he but once in the future broke the rule), and that was, never himself to drink beer or spirits between meal times ; never to treat others, or allow himself to be treated between meal hours, for he always said, 'It is not what a man takes at, but between, meals that makes the drunkard ; and that it is what he is treated to, and treats others to, that impoverishes the working man.' This non-treating conduct made Proctor to be hated by Mason, one of the pit overseers. Mason himself was rarely thoroughly sober, not only because he spent so

much of high wages in drink, but also because those men who wanted to gain his favour or indulgence treated him. If a man was late at the morning roll-call, he would begin his excuse for being so by asking, 'Won't you take something to drink this morning, Mr. Mason?' and then the drink-bribe would make the fault of lateness to be overlooked.

Proctor never would stoop to this meanness and sin of treating, so Mason, as I said before, hated him, and showed his dislike in many petty ways, thwarting and finding fault with him unnecessarily, whenever he had as overseer any opportunity of doing so. This treatment Proctor never resented, and if anyone wondered at his forbearance he would say, 'I am but a workman, and it is my simple duty to obey those put in authority over me, and I cannot please my Heavenly Master if I am overcome by evil, and not try rather by patient obedience to overcome evil with good.'

The day when our tale, or rather life-story, commences, was the 29th of May, when the Durham regatta was to be held. Mr. Dove

was a kind master to his men ; he liked to promote rational enjoyment for them, and had therefore, given a general holiday, and Proctor, who was good at all athletic sports, and was an excellent oarsman, was to pull in one of the scull races.

Proctor took the short cut to Durham which I have already named to you, and thought that he had never enjoyed a walk in his life more than he did that morning. The red and white hawthorn were in full bloom in the park, across which the rabbit scudded. The tender ferns were uncurling their long leaves. There was health on the gale, freshness in the stream. Whistling, he walked on with springy, elastic step, when suddenly he paused to listen as he approached Durham by the Prebendary Bridge, for it was the custom formerly at this old town for the whole choir to sing from the Cathedral tower the Hallelujah Chorus after the morning's service, with its Thanksgiving for the Restoration of King Charles II.*

* The Editor believes this custom is now given up, as the Thanksgiving service is not used in churches.

Resting his elbows on the parapet of the bridge, Proctor stood there, drinking in that glorious sound, as it floated down from the sacred building, borne along and softened by the river's breeze. 'Hallelujah, Hallelujah!' again and again repeated the choir; 'Hallelujah, Hallelujah!' again re-echoed Proctor's heart; then bowing his head on his hands, he exclaimed, 'Oh! when shall we sing that song not only with our lips here on earth, but with heart-service amongst the redeemed of heaven?' Never more than at that moment did John long after that holiness without which none can see God,—never more truly prayed, 'Thy kingdom come.' But I must not linger over each scene,—suffice it to say, that Proctor thoroughly enjoyed his day—won the scull race for which he pulled, and then turned homeward without waiting for the evening fireworks; persuading some more young men to do the same, that they might not be drawn into, nor he witness, the drunkenness which he was sure would finish the regatta; for unfortunately in England there is rarely a day of harmless amusement, be it cricket, or boat-

ing, or some social fête, which is not defiled and made sin-cursed by the treating and drinking that accompany it, as if enjoyment and happiness could not be known unless the cup and the glass were there also.

I must now mention, what I have hitherto forgotten, that Proctor's pretty white-washed cottage, with its garden, wherein were planted such hardy flowers as would bloom in the cold north country, was only separated from Mason's more pretentious, two-storied house by a few fields. The latter had a dilapidated look, like a broken-down bankrupt.

What was formerly a parlour was now the owner's bedroom, as it was not often that he could have found at night his way upstairs, therefore in the big front attic slept his children.

It was near midnight, and Proctor was still talking with his wife over the events of the day, when suddenly he heard a cry of fire; on looking out he saw Mason's house, with the red, dull smoke curling out of the upper windows: with one bound he cleared his garden hedge, and soon reached it.

Mason, who had returned late from Durham, and who, it is supposed, had accidentally set fire to some straw when going to the cellar for more drink, stood there in helpless, hopeless, drunken stupidity. The poor wife, with a new-born child not a week old in her arms, was shrieking, and beseeching the neighbours to save her children. Four had been brought downstairs, two of them badly burned, but two younger ones yet remained in the burning room. Bright flames were licking round the old wooden staircase, which had partially fallen in, and thus to reach the little ones upstairs seemed impossible. Men had run to a neighbouring farm for a longer ladder, for the only one at the house was too short to reach the upper window.

Proctor had seen an empty beer barrel by the door, so calling out to the spectators, 'Run the barrel to the window, put the ladder on it, and keep both steady!' rushed into the burning house. He remembered that a few days before he had seen a large hole in the flooring of the lumber room over the back washhouse, so springing at

the rafter that crossed the broken in ceiling, he pushed himself into the garret, then passed into the front room where the children lay, asleep or suffocated, he knew not which. He snatched them from the bed, and appeared at the window. 'Impossible ! impossible !' shouted out the now collected crowd. 'You cannot bring both down, Proctor, save one !' But there was no other reply from the brave man, but, 'Steady boys, keep the ladder steady !' and then, one little one clasped close to his breast, and with the other tucked under his arm that his hand should be free to clutch the ladder, he slowly and cautiously descended till he touched the barrel, when he leaped to the ground. One ringing shout of praise greeted him. It was too much for the poor, feeble mother, who fainted in the arms of the kind-hearted women collected round her. All thought her dying. Seeing that children and mother alike needed immediately a doctor's care, without listening to the hearty praise bestowed on him, Proctor only replied to it, with a soul-felt 'Thank God !' then added,

‘Take care of Mrs. Mason and the children. I will fetch MacFane.’

Now MacFane was a young Scotch doctor, the idol of the poor, from his great kindness and unremitting care of them, in sickness, or when any pit accident occurred, but he lived on the other side of the river with the dangerous quicksands. To go round by Sunderland Bridge, or Willington, would alike take too long, when suffering children, and perhaps a dying mother, needed a doctor; so Proctor decided to cross the Ford, which, dangerous by day-time, was doubly so at night. Once only he turned his head to take a last look of his own white little cottage, now fading into distance, paused one second, as if commending all those dear to him (should he never see them again) to a Father in heaven, then rapidly he strode on, repeating as he went,—

‘When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and the floods they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the

flames kindle upon thee.' Thus strengthening himself by faith the brave man reached the water side. The red alder, with its bark flecked white like a starling's wing, grew on its banks. So cautiously taking hold of a strong but bending bough, he felt for a firm footing in the river, then using like an Alpine mountaineer, a pole he had picked up on the road, he sprang lightly into its waters, and reached the north bank safely. Another mentally-offered but heart-prayer to Him who had preserved him through the water as through the fire, and Proctor pressed on to MacFane, whose home he soon reached; then rousing the excellent Scotchman, and helping him to horse the dog-cart, the two men quickly returned to Mason's house, where the doctor was indeed sorely needed both by mother and children.

The fame of Proctor's gallant conduct soon rang through the country. Praised in the lordly halls, and told by the pitmen's cottage hearths, a subscription was raised to purchase him and his family an annuity, the deed of which was to be presented to him at a public dinner, late

in August, by which time the gentry of the neighbourhood had usually returned to their country seats.

At length the 29th of August, the long-expected day, arrived. The date of the 29th had been fixed, as a pretty compliment to Proctor's brave deeds, which had been performed on another 29th—the 29th of May. His wife could not have the happiness of accompanying her husband, as their only child was not well, and the anxious mother did not like to leave it for even a few hours. So telling our hero she would not be anxious if he did not return home that night, but would patiently wait to hear the full account of his honours till recounted over the breakfast-table the following day, the proud woman pinned a nosegay on his coat, and then, with a loving, oft-repeated kiss—alas ! that they should be the last—watched him with her eyes (and what happy tears dimmed them !) shaded by her hand, till a bend in the lane hid him from her sight. Proctor's walk that day was like a triumphal march ; the cottagers vieing one with another to be at their

doors with glasses in their hands, and then as they offered a full one to him, quaffed down themselves one to its dregs, saying their hearty 'To your health, Proctor.'

Cordially, gratefully, would he return thanks for their kind wishes, but only just tasting the proffered cup, would return the glass undrained; and when urged, 'Drink it down, mon, drink it down, it will do thee no harm,' he replied over and over again that morning, 'I am equally grateful, friends, but I have long made it a rule not to drink between meals, and though I do break this rule to-day (in return for 'your health') by even tasting your glass, you must excuse me, but I cannot do more than that.' Again I say, alas! alas! that Proctor did not keep strictly to his rule, and even broke it by 'just tasting.'

It was a proud day for him when he took his place on the right hand of the noble chairman at the banquet held in the Town Hall, round which hung the escutcheon of many an old county family; but I doubt if any of the arms emblazoned there recorded in their bearings more gallant deeds than those en-

grossed on the parchment given to Proctor with his annuity paper.

When the cloth was withdrawn, the stalwart peer rose, every man rising also, and then handing, with many kind words, the deeds to Proctor, turned to the standing company, calling out, 'Now for a good cheer, such as English lungs alone can give.' Then such a cheer arose as those who heard it will never forget, taken up by the crowd in the market-place without, floating away over the keep of the old castle, and dying into silence amidst the gable pinnacles of the cathedral.

Had the proceedings ended here, it would have been well for Proctor, but then the Mayor would get on his legs, making a rambling speech, and calling him the victor of the elements—fire and water. So toast succeeded toast, until the final one, that of 'the beloved chairman, who had so kindly and ably presided on the occasion,' was drunk. The heat of the room, which was full to overflowing, and on which shone full the beams of a summer afternoon sun,

the excitement of his feelings, and those his best ones, the little tastes of the morning—and every little makes a mickle—were all telling on Proctor, without his being the least conscious of it, for such was his abhorrence of drunkenness, that he would never have raised the glass to his lips, not even to toast the chairman (for he ever feared to offend God rather than man), had he been the least aware how heat, excitement, and toasts were affecting him. The cool freshness of the outer air, after the stifling atmosphere of the town-hall, only made matters worse. His gait became staggering, though he remained unconscious that he had been overtaken in the very sin which he held most in abhorrence, until he reached the Prebendary's Bridge, and heard two strangers, who were passing in a gig, and who little knew all the stirring events of the day, say one to another, 'How sad to see a respectable-looking man like that, so tipsy at such an early hour in the evening. See how he is reeling!' The shock sobered him. Then he exclaimed aloud, as if heart-wrung, 'O God,

I am drunk !' Not as one taking God's name in vain did he utter this holy word, but as one in utter self-aborrence, confessing himself before an all-pure Being, for though his swaying limbs would not obey his will, the mind was clear enough (though excited) to feel his condition, and that lower than the beasts.

Poor Proctor ! he went up to the bridge, and putting his arms on the parapet, just as he had done that May morning, three short months ago, when he had listened to the Hallelujah Chorus, he rested there now in penitential dejection. Many people returning to their homes passed him, with the friendly greeting, ' Good night, Proctor ;' but still he answered not, but leant there. The lights from many a cottage casement died out, one after another, like many a bright hope in many a young life, but still he leant there.

The soft cool night breeze rose from the cooler water, and freshened his fevered brow, but still he leant there in soul-agony at the soul's degradation ; and then his wife—for he resolved to tell her all—how would she ever

respect and put confidence in him again? At last the harvest moon rose, and made a silver sheen on the middle of the river, whilst by the banks it flowed on in darkness from the shadow of the hanging woods. And the calm scene brought calm to his heart. Yes, he thought, my soul is like part of that river; it is in darkness now, but God is a God of mercy; He knows that my sin was not an intentional one, that I have been overtaken in the fault, and though, like David, I hate and abhor myself, yet I trust He will restore me to the light of His countenance, and 'blot out as a cloud my offences, and as a morning cloud my sin.'

Then he rose from the bridge and walked slowly on, his limbs still refusing their usual vigorous power, but the mind growing clearer and clearer every moment. At last he reached the glorious old church by the castle. The grey tombstones stood out white like marble in the glimmer of the moonshine. Through the night-mist, the snow-coloured deer looked like phantom ones, as they browsed in the park, and all nature was so still, you could hear the quick

cropping of the grass as the sheep shortly plucked at it, and the lazy flapping of the castle's flag, as it was stirred to and fro by the light summer breeze. Then Proctor turned aside into the Peace-yard, as the Germans call our churchyard ; and kneeling there, prayed long and earnestly to be forgiven. And as the moon sank lower in the west, her beams fell through the boughs of the dark yew-trees down on the penitent man. Ere he rose he felt he was forgiven, for had not One who cannot lie promised, ' Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ? '

Through dew-covered mossy grass, slowly he wended his way across the park, for now he was very weary. The last morning's walk, the afternoon's triumphal excitement, the sorrow and shame of this night's feelings, had all exhausted him, and he was thankful as the gay streak in the east told of the coming dawn, to think how near he was once more to his own cottage home, and of the loving welcome that awaited him there.

There was now but the ford to cross. Yes ; then home ! As he stepped across it in the

morning he had marked how the alder bush was to his right. Now he must keep it to his left ; so with his eye on it, he stepped into the river, and was nearly across it, when—oh, horror !—the sand was sinking under him. With an effort, he half extricated himself, and caught at some long grass and reeds on the bank ; but they gave way, bringing a clayey sod with them, which fell with a heavy splash into the water. Again and again he grasped at tree and rush, again and again to feel himself only sinking back in the sand. One spring with his usual athletic strength would have saved him ; but the life-power was left drowned in the pledge-cups of the day—drowned in those fatal sips.

At last, exhausted, he fell insensible, the feet imbedded in the cruel sand ; his breast (on which were still his wife's now crushed and faded flowers) laying across the reedy edge, the cold water running past him, and his head resting on the mossy bank.

Dawn burst into daybreak ; all nature awoke joyous after the sleep of night. The sleek water-rat, from its hole, took its morning plunge

bath ; the timid water-hen and her brood swept swiftly from under the alder roots, both bird and beast unscared by him who lay there, in that awful sleep-stillness that knows no waking.

Not uneasy at his non-return the previous evening, but lovingly impatient (with a loving-hearted woman's impatience) for her husband's return, Mrs. Proctor waited that morn, wondering, like Sisera's mother, why he tarried so long in his coming. The snow-white cloth was laid on the breakfast-table : a bouquet of varied asters from the garden stood on it. The north country dainty galette-cake had long been ready. Her boy had been dressed in his Sunday frock to do honour to the honour-crowned father, and still he came not. The pitmen passed to their work, and the tongue of the roll-call bell, proclaiming that man goeth forth to his labour until evening, sounded far and wide over the country, but still he came not. The child grew fretful for its breakfast. Indoors, the ticking of the old clock, as the heavy pendulum swayed to and fro, telling hours were dying, minutes flying, irritated the poor wife's nerves ;

so she stood outside the door, her eyes wearied with looking down the lane, where her husband had last disappeared from her view. And still he came not.

At length she saw slowly coming down the lane a cart with men following it. She hurried forward to ask them whether they could give her any tidings of her husband, when she saw extended at the bottom of it the lifeless form of him for whom she had so long and anxiously waited, the clothes clinging to it clay-stained from the river's bed, and dripping wet from its waters. The carter, an hour previously, as he had passed the ford, had seen Proctor lying there, and hurrying off a comrade to fetch MacFane, had brought the cold corpse to the cottage home. Thus he, who yesterday morn had left it in the full vigour of life, was brought back there lifeless, having found *death*—oh, cruel mockery!—through the acts of them who had raised the cups to drink his health.

As MacFane, a few hours later, drew from poor Proctor's pocket the illuminated parchment, now saturated with water, its letters

blurred, its gold all dimmed, tears he was not ashamed of fell from the eyes of the kind-hearted doctor, as he laid it on the breakfast-table with its untasted repast. ‘Man’s verdict,’ said MacFane, thinking aloud, ‘will be “Died from the visitation of God, brought on by exposure and exhaustion,” but will not the recording angel, alas ! write, “Died from man’s curse, over which devils rejoice : died from being—Treated to Drink.”’

Friends, the tale is a sad one, but not so sad as the accursed system of treating to drink. This curse of treating, this blight, falls as a sin-pall throughout the length and breadth of the land, none escape, it falls on every rank and grade of life in England. Servants treat neighbours’ servants in the lordly hall ; tradesmen retreat to their back-parlours to seal a bargain, or sign a receipt, over the treating glass ; workmen, artisans, labourers, all think it generous to treat one another, all forgetting, from the hall to the cottage, that most solemn text, ‘Woe unto the world because of offences (or

sins), but woe unto that man by whom the offence comes.' Woe to the drunkard, for he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; but a thousand-fold woe to them who make the drunkard. Oh, that I had the trumpet of the archangel to proclaim throughout the length and breadth of the land, to rich and poor, to noble and peasant, in the hall and the cottage, to man, to woman, and even to childhood,—Woe, woe, woe ! thricefold woe to that man by whom the offence, or sin, comes.

Friends, pause one moment and consider what your feelings will be at the great and awful day of judgment, when you stand before Him by whom all actions are weighed. Hitherto you may have thought your earthly life blameless and respectable ; you may, like the Pharisee of old, have thanked God that you were not as other men were, even as the drunkard, but that you were sober, temperate in all things ; and yet *then* you may hear to your dismay, ' Depart, ye accursed,' for woe unto that man by whom the offence comes. Friends, dear friends, let me plead with you ere it be too late.

Bring not this woe on your own souls for having brought and caused sin in another, but rather on your knees this night, each night, make this resolution, 'God helping me, henceforth I will neither treat, nor invite to drink, any person whatever between meal hours. May He forgive me through Jesu's blood for having caused offence in the past, and give me of His Holy Spirit that I may not cause offence for the future,—may not dye my soul with a crime yet deeper than Cain's,—may not destroy a brother's *soul* by—TREATING TO DRINK !'

A Temperance Pledge Card with the additional pledge, 'not to treat or invite to drink between meal hours,' has been drawn up by the author, and is published by Messrs. Hatchard.

THE RAFT.

THE white cottage stood on a cliff, looking down over the wide blue sea. Without, an autumn wind sighed amongst the tall poplars which skirted one side of the garden; the yellow leaves were falling to the ground, leaving many a sturdier comrade yet clinging to the slim twig-like branches; the last glory of the setting sun had died off the sea, leaving it a cold grey; the lapwing had ceased its plaintive cry over the moorland, which spread upwards to the distant down. Without, the chill of an autumn eve; within, the warmth of a cottage home. A bright, clear fire burnt in the well-polished grate; a bird-cage hung at the window, covered by a dark handkerchief to shade the sleeping bird from the light; a dresser

stood in one corner of the kitchen, and on it a man's linen, neatly folded, ready for ironing ; a cat dozed under a big arm-chair, where sat Mrs. Bennet, and by her side a manly young sailor. Both were alike in feature, but not in expression. The woman's face had a calm look, as if the heart within was purified by sorrow, and knew a peace (resting on the Rock of Ages) which the world could not give, or take away. The lad's face had a look of joyous energy and strength that, alas ! so oft dies away with the bloom of youth. Parent and child (for parent and child they were) were specially dear to one another, for ' he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.' Her husband had been in the Coast Guard, and was drowned in a squall off Beechy Head, whilst the boy was still in early childhood.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Bennet removed from Eastbourne to her present cottage on the cliff, not only because it was near the Coast Guard Station to which Bennet had first brought her as his bride, but because also she wished to bring up her only child carefully,

and to withdraw him from the contamination of the loose associates which he might make on the Eastbourne beach. Mrs. Bennet's idea of education was a just one. She did not think it meant only book and head learning, but rearing and training *upward* an immortal soul for heaven.

The widow had, indeed, sown much good seed in the boy's heart, and watered it with many prayers, but she could not deceive herself into the belief that hitherto it was growing, or had even taken root there; still, like St. Monica of old, who always said of her son, St. Augustine, 'that she could not think a child of many prayers would be lost,' Mrs. Bennet hoped on, sowed on, prayed on. All she could save from her earnings by needle-work she spent on sending Jem to a superior school at Ringwold, as she had hoped to have put him out in what she called a shore-life, to have apprenticed him to some trade. But in this she was disappointed. From childhood the boy was bent on (as he said) 'following father's steps,' and being a sailor. So, finding it was

both useless and hopeless to thwart her son's passion for the sea, she had at last given her consent (not without many bitter tears) to his getting rated on the books of one of Green's ships, then going out to India.

The last evening to be spent together for many a weary month had now arrived, its last meal had been partaken, when the widow, turning to her son (the very joy and light of her heart), said, 'Draw your chair close to the fire, Jem, and let us have a chat, for it may be long before, if ever, I see you again.'

'Don't be cast down, mother,' answered the lad; 'don't be cast down. Good luck to our ship, the *Beautiful Bess*, and in less than two years I shall be home again.'

'Not by good luck, Will,' replied the widow, 'but by God's blessing, I hope and pray to see you again. May He protect you, my own dear lad, and bring you safe home; but oh, Jem, if your mother should never see you again in this humble cottage, try, my own boy, that I may meet you in that better home which our dear Saviour died to purchase for us.'

‘Well, dear mother,’ said the young man, ‘I will try to be good ; but you know, if there is one thing I hate it is dulness, and that my motto always is, A merry life for me.’

‘Jem,’ answered Mrs. Bennet, taking his hand, ‘your old mother does not want to preach to you ; the young ill brook that ; but just listen to me for one moment.

‘Religion, Jem, does not make a man dull, nor take from his life enjoyment ; on the contrary, I think that man must feel the happiest, and have the lightest heart, who thinks *of* God, and prays *to* God, as a Father who loves him and protects him in this life, and who, when this life is ended, will welcome him, for dear Jesu’s sake, into a home, where there is no sin, or sorrow, or suffering. Remember, lad, also, that it is no use *trying* to be good without *praying* to be good, without asking for God’s blessed Spirit to help you to be so, and asking all in Jesu’s name. Never forget your God, Jem ; then your God will never forget you.

‘Perhaps you cannot always kneel to pray, neither did Nehemiah as he *stood*, cup-bearer to

the heathen king, and said in his heart, and from his heart, "Remember me, O Lord, for good ;" but as you keep watch on deck, and see the blue sea and shining stars, your heart can pray. Praying for your absent mother in dear old England, praying that when the voyage of this life is over you may reach a safe port in heaven above ; and as you stand at the wheel, with your eyes fixed on the compass, again cannot your heart pray ?

' Praying that God's Word may be ever your compass, to guide you over life's stormy sea, and helping you to steer your path aright. Now, Jem, only a few more words, for I have much to do ere to-morrow's sunrise. First,—Prepare to meet your God. Do not put off that preparation till sickness, and storm, and shipwreck come, for then, in those dread hours, you will have little if any time to think of preparation. But still, should danger come, and you fear to stand before God's judgment-seat, remember the disciples' prayer, when the tempest was so great that their ship was covered with the waves. It was but a short one of five words, " Lord, save us, we

perish," but it was a heart-prayer, and Jesus accepted it, and did save them. Read often and ponder over what David says in the 107th Psalm, "They that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. For He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths : their soul is melted because of trouble." And listen, Jem, what follows, "*Then* they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm. He bringeth them unto their desired haven."

‘My boy, my only child, in fair days and in health, remember thy Creator; and in every sorrow turn also to Him. And may the God of Israel save and keep thee, my loved, my only one!’

The widow's voice trembled. She could say no more.

The next morning Jem joined his ship, the *Beautiful Bess*, at Gravesend. Two days later

they were beating down Channel. As she passed off Ringwood, Jem could see, with the ship's strong telescope, the little white cottage on the cliff. Oh, how his heart yearned (as he said to a shipmate standing near him) to have one more kiss from the old mother at home. We are apt often to speak of a 'ship's crew' as of the machinery of the engine, as inanimate objects, and not as men of warm, true hearts and strong feelings; and yet stronger feelings are not to be found in any class than amongst seafaring men. Holding as they do their lives in their hands, never knowing whether they will see home again, home-ties have a hold on their hearts, such as very few landmen feel. I have passed down Channel and stood amongst sailors, and seen many an eye dim as those rich corn-lands faded from their view, amongst whose ripe sheaves stood the homes of their childhood, or as they saw the forests of Hampshire, amongst whose glades children who called them father would be playing, and gathering up the acorns.

But let us return to the *Beautiful Bess*, for as

we left her sailing with all canvas set, and a fair breeze, if we do not go on board we shall be left behind.

Jem Bennet soon became a favourite with every one, both fore and aft. Frank, gay, active, all liked him, but especially so did Mary Harris, a little girl of about eight years of age, who was going out with her mother, an officer's wife, to India.

Mary was never happy without Jem, who was like a kind nurse to her; now amusing her, now tying on her little hat, now wrapping her cloak about her when the night breeze was chill; and the mother was grateful to Jem for his attention, as she had no nurse for the child, and was herself delicate.

Poor little Mary, it was pretty to see her with the great, strong, hearty sailor. It was pretty, hot tropical evenings, to see the child stand beside her mother, in some quiet corner of the deck, her little hands crossed behind her, saying her hymn before she went down to the cabin to lisp out there her prayers. And this was Mary's evening hymn,—

‘ Now when I lay me down to sleep,
I give my soul to Christ to keep ;
Wake I at morn, or wake I never,
I give my soul to Christ for ever.’

Then Jem would come and stand near Mary, would listen to the child’s simple, earnest voice, would remember how *he* also, in the cottage home in dear old England, had stood at a loved mother’s knee, and said there *his* evening prayers,—prayers, alas ! now generally forgotten. Then, under the influence of the scene, Jem would make resolutions never again to neglect saying them ; resolutions soon to be forgotten, for a few minutes after he had left the child, and had rejoined the sailors and steerage passengers, he would be the life and soul of every wild frolic and fun.

Pretty was it, on crossing the line, to see the child’s delight at the mummerly that is always practised on this occasion on board ship. And when she saw that it was indeed her own favourite Jem who was acting old Father Neptune, with a long, flowing white beard, her merry laugh rang out far over the water. If Jem

acted the part of Father Neptune, the sweet child, with her white frock, and sea-green sash (a compliment to the sea-god's fête-day), her fair hair, with the gloss of a silkworm's cocoon, falling over her shoulders, looked a very little mermaid. Often in after years did the fond mother recall that day, the last time she was ever to hear on earth her Mary's joyous laugh.

It was but a few days later when Mary called to her favourite Jem, 'to come quickly and see the pretty little black bird swimming on the waves,' which had already begun to roll with a heavy swell. Mary had so missed her home-pets that she was so glad to see what she called a birdie again. It was a Stormy Petrel, one of those birds which sailors call Mother Carey's chickens, and which they believe always announce the coming storm. At the sight of it rough weather they foretold, and rough weather indeed they had. For five days and five nights did the *Beautiful Bess*, with bare spars, and hatches battened down, gallantly ride out the mad fury of the storm. For five days and five nights did the captain and the sailors do all

that brave men and British sailors could do for her safety. For five days and five nights did men's hearts fail them for fear, not knowing at sunrise whether they should see another sunset, or at sunset whether they should see another sunrise; but all through those hours of danger did mother and child win the love and admiration of every one by their calmness. All through those five nights of storm had Mary still repeated at her mother's knee her evening hymn, and few could hear the innocent child repeat,—

‘Wake I at morn, or wake I never,
I give my soul to Christ for ever,’

without wishing for her simple faith, wishing that they, like her, might wake safe in Jesu's arms if they should know no earthly waking.

At last *Beautiful Bess* sprang a leak. All the pumps could not save her from filling. All knew that in a few hours she must settle down in the angry waters. There was nothing to be done but to take to the boats, and construct quickly a raft, as the boats would not be sufficient to carry both passengers and crew.

At last the moment came when the vessel was to be deserted. Two boats were lowered, were over-crowded, and sank. Three others were lowered, were soon filled, and drifted out into the wild ocean, never again to be heard of. Mrs. Harris had repeatedly been urged to take, with Mary, her place in these boats, but she had steadily declined. She had witnessed with admiration Captain Manby's calmness, skill, and courage during the past days of danger ; and she felt that both she and her child would, humanly speaking, be safer with him than with the undisciplined crowd of the boats. The captain, as last person to leave the ship, would only take his place on the raft after the boats were filled, and therefore on this frail raft Mrs. Harris decided to go also.

All that thoughtful men could do, Captain Manly and sailors did for that raft, even in those hours of peril, thinking of such little comforts as they could hurriedly collect together for Mary and her mother. The ship's union-jack was taken also, so that they might (should they be spared to use it) hoist it on

their solitary spar, hoping thus to attract the attention of some passing vessel to their pitiful condition.

And now, friends, picture the scene. Overhead, the murky darkness of storm-clouds, the voice of the angry wind almost drowning that of the captain as he gave his commands. The sea boiling, surging, raging; waves mountains high, rushing after wave, and on them a frail raft, on which were huddled together thirteen shipwrecked persons, and a young tender child.

When the captain left the once *Beautiful Bess* (the now fast doomed vessel), there was naught else to do but cut the rope that held the raft to her side, and let it float out over the wild waters. It was Jem's business to sever the rope as soon as the command was sung out, 'Clear away.' When the raised hatchet did fall, parting the cable, the thought of his mother, far away, and the prayer she had the last evening taught him rose to Jem's memory, and the words to his lips, and in his heart's agony he unconsciously cried aloud, 'Lord, save us, or we perish.' Mary knew well the voice of prayer, which

found an echo in her pure heart, and looking up with approbation into her favourite young sailor's face, said, 'That is nice, good Jem ; pray for us all ;' and then looking round at the rest of the crew, she added (so innocently), ' But will it not be better if we all pray together ? '

' Amen ! ' responded the captain, and then, amongst the roaring of the sea and the howling of the wind, rose from that shipwrecked crew one united cry to Heaven, ' Lord, save us, or we perish ! '

Oh, dear friends, did the fervent prayer of faith ever rise to God's throne unheard, unheeded ? Did He ever turn a deaf ear to the cry of the suffering one ? Dear friends, never, never. He may not grant *all* our prayer, nor our prayer *just* in the way we wish ; *but* He hears it, and grants it, in the manner His all-loving, all-merciful goodness sees best for us ; and even thus did He accept that heart-raised prayer, ' Lord, save us, we perish. '

When night fell, Jem kindly whispered to the child, ' Try not to be afraid, missy, but go to sleep. '

‘ Oh, Jem,’ replied Mary, with soft reproach, ‘ how can I be afraid when God is here, and *there ?*’ pointing up to the skies as she said the last word.* Again the evening hymn was repeated ere she calmly fell asleep, her heart resting on the mercy of God, and her head nestled in her mother’s bosom.

Eleven days later, and the sea had long lulled down to a still calm. Not a breeze to stir the air or fill the one sail of the raft, which lay motionless, like a

‘ painted raft
Upon a painted ocean.’

Hungry sharks swam round it, as if awaiting human prey. A scorching tropical sun shone down on the fever-wearied crew ; there was not a cloud in the sky’s wide blue expanse to soften its powerful rays. Oh how those worn ones longed to feel once more the cool dew of a May morning in dear far-away old England,—pined for its July summer showers, refreshing

* An answer really given to the writer by a young child in a storm.

and making green the aftermath—dreamt of the shades of the beech-groves of Hertfordshire, or the oak-woods of Sussex.

Mary daily grew weaker and weaker, and all saw that without they were soon picked up by some passing vessel, the sweet, gentle child would not be much longer spared to them. It was the thirteenth evening since they had deserted the *Beautiful Bess*. Mary was too languid to raise her head from (where pillowed) her mother's lap; but, as in former happy evenings, as in later storm-tossed nights, still did the child faintly breathe out from between her fever-parched lips her constant hymn,—

‘When I lay me down to sleep,
I give my soul to Christ to keep;
Wake I at morn, or wake I never,
I give my soul to Christ for ever.’

And then she fell asleep. The next morning, as the red streak in the east proclaimed the coming day, with its life-destroying heat, so dreaded by the anxious mother (who had all the love, but not the weakness of a Hagar

for her child), she prayed to a God of love to give her little one strength to bear with patience the suffering, and herself strength without murmuring to see her darling suffer. Late into the morning the mother sat, fearing to move, and wake her Mary to hours of weakness and pain. At length her loving hand touched the child's soft cheek. The fever-heat no longer burned on it ; it was exchanged for the ice-chill of death. And thus was the parent's prayer anticipated,—no more pain for the little one ; thus was the child's hymn accepted,—she had

‘ Given her soul to Christ for ever.’

Not even through the glowing heat of one day did the captain dare spare Mrs. Harris her child, but prepared at once for the last ceremony. So little had been saved from the sunk ship, that it was difficult to know in what decently to wrap the slight form of the little child, till her faithful Jem exclaimed, ‘ She was the sweetest little Christian gentlewoman that ever breathed ; let her have our flag. That English ensign that

‘ “ Has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze.” ’

So they lowered it, and then, gently and reverently, assisted by Jem, the sorrowing mother laid her darling in it, at once her shroud and coffin, whilst the crew, with delicate sympathy, turned from the weeping woman, not to intrude on her grief, looking on the blue sea, so soon to be Mary's grave.

When all was ready, Captain Manby took Mary's own little prayer-book, which she herself had remembered to bring with her on the raft, and began to read out from it the service for the ‘Burial of their dead at sea.’ As he pronounced the words, ‘We commit her body to the deep,’ gently they lowered the ‘Gathered Lily’ over the low side of the raft, that the splash of the parted waters should fall as softly as possible on the mother's ear and bleeding heart. A little ripple succeeded of waters meeting again, a few wider and wider-extended circles faded away, and then Mary rested in the ocean's depth, to wait there till her Lord

should come and summon the sea to give up its dead.

Jem dreaded the evening hour, when the child's voice, hushed for ever in death, would never again be heard repeating her evening hymn. But when night fell the mother only clasped her hands firmly together, as if trying to subdue the heart's feelings, and looking up to that Heaven wherein her treasure was now garnered, began in a low tone to repeat,—

‘Now when I lay me down to sleep,
I give my soul to Christ to keep,
Wake I at morn or wake I never——’

Poor parent! the three first lines were repeated—repeated, indeed, with faltering lip and dimmed eye; but when she came to the last one her feelings overpowered her, and sobs prevented her adding more, but the loved child's loved words were not unsaid, only it was the manly but saddened voice of the young sailor who uttered them, and as he slowly repeated the concluding line,—

‘I give my soul to Christ for ever,’

it seemed as if it came from his heart, and

was a dedication service in which he gave himself to Mary's God for ever.

Two days later the bark, *Mary Jane*, also outward bound to Calcutta, seeing their flag of distress (for the crew had sewn white linen together to make a flag to replace the 'hauled-down' honoured one), picked them all off the raft. Thus, save the one little fair bud whom Jesus had plucked for His own bosom, God, in His infinite love, had heard and accepted the prayer, 'Lord, save us, we perish,' and did deliver them out of their distress.

As they entered the Hooghly river, Jem, who was looking down into the flowing tide, thinking of his old mother in her cottage home, thinking of Mary in her coral-cradle grave beneath the sea, felt a kind hand on his shoulder, and turning saw it was Mrs. Harris, who said, 'Jem, my lad, "So when they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, he saved them out of their distress." Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men. Come with me next Sunday, Jem, to the cathedral at

Calcutta, and we will return thanks to Almighty God for all His benefits.'

As the bereaved mother said gently these words, the young sailor raised his eyes to hers, as if wondering, questioning, 'Can you in your great sorrow thank God for mercies?'

Mrs. Harris understood the look, and answered the unspoken words, saying, 'Yes, Jem, I wish to return thanks to a God of mercies for giving me so many more than I deserve; if He in His wisdom has seen fit to take my darling from me to *Himself*,—and how much I as a mother miss her, God alone knows,—shall I be less resigned than the Gentile mother of old, and not say, "It *is* well with the child?" And is it *not* well with her, Jem? Safe above in heaven!'

Mrs. Harris here paused a moment, as if a flood of sad memories swept over her heart, and then added, as if only thinking aloud, 'Yes, safe in heaven, where there is "no more sea."'

Again there was a pause, and then the mother continued, 'And beside, Jem, think of my poor husband, far away up the country, is it not a great mercy that I am spared to comfort him

who has been waiting and longing to clasp his little one again in his arms, and is now childless. Often of late, on my knees in my cabin, have I read those beautiful words of St. Paul, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble *by the comfort* wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' And then have I prayed and pleaded, Jem, for resignation that I might better comfort my husband and Mary's father.'

As she said this, such a calm spread over the wife and mother's face, that the young man felt sure that the answer to Mrs. Harris's prayer *must* have been, 'My peace I *give* unto you.'

On the following Sunday there might be seen in the cathedral at Calcutta thirteen persons, kneeling together in fervent thanksgiving as the clergyman gave out, 'Thirteen persons desire to return thanks to Almighty God for safe deliverance from shipwreck.' And very touching was it to hear sung, not only by them but

by the congregation, who had heard of their sufferings and their deliverance, the following beautiful hymn,—

‘ Fierce raged the tempest o’er the deep,
Watch did Thine anxious servants keep,
But Thou wast wrapped in quiet sleep,
Calm and still.

‘ “ Save, Lord, we perish !” was their cry,
“ O save us in our agony !”
Thy word above the storm rose high,
“ Peace, be still.” ’

‘ The wild winds hushed ; the angry deep
Sank, like a little child, to sleep ;
The sullen billows ceased to leap
At Thy will.

‘ So when our life is clouded o’er,
And storm-winds drift us from the shore,
Say (lest we sink to rise no more),
“ Peace, be still.” ’

Need I say how little Mary was remembered at the words—

‘ Sank, like a little child to sleep ’ ?

Mrs. Harris and Jem parted at the cathedral door, she, the following morning, to join her husband at Simla, he to take ship the next week

and return to England. I know not whether they will ever meet again on earth ; if not, I feel sure that through Christ's redeeming blood they will meet in heaven, for from that day Jem became a praying man ; and when he exchanges prayer on earth for praise in heaven, not the *least* of the mercies for which he will give thanks will be the days that brought him to a knowledge and value of a Saviour—the days of suffering spent on—The Raft.

It was late on a May night when Jem once more landed in old England, at a seaport town near his mother's cottage on the cliff. Much as his heart yearned for home, it was too late that night to go there ; but whilst it was yet early dawn he started for it, taking the path by the shore. Gulls were skimming over the sea, now dipping in, now rising from it. The light of the coming day shone on their white wings, till they looked silvered (like the fable-bird Hope of the children's story). Every rock and stone seemed old familiar friends to him. Here as a boy, proud of his strength, he had helped

to haul up some fisherman's boat. There he had filled his frock with treasures—tiny crabs and coloured shells—to take to his mother. At last he came to the many steps cut in the cliff that led to the Coast Guard Station. The wild brassica, with its yellow star-shaped flower, and green, crimped-curved leaf, dotted the white face of the cliff, rendered yet more gay by the wall-flowers of every hue, from the deep brown to the pale gold, which grew on it. Above on the moorland the white lady's smock (virgin maids of honour to their queen, the golden butter-cup) reared their dainty heads. The poplars had taken the pale green tint of early spring. At the cottage-door stood his mother, with her hands clasped before her, looking out far away over the sea. Jem felt she was not only thinking *of*, but praying for *him*, offering up her early morning petition to *her*, and now also *his*, God. One moment more and Jem's arms were round her neck, as he exclaimed, 'Mother, dear mother, I should have perished, but *He*, the Lord, saved me!'

Friends, forget not this simple story; lay it

to heart ; ask yourselves, 'Have I yet learnt the prayer, "Lord, save us, or we perish?"' if not, learn it, say it, feel it. Let your cry each night and morning be, 'Lord Jesus, wash me from my past sins, that I perish not. Save me from the power of sin, that I perish not. Save me from death eternal, that I perish not.' In sickness and in health, in life and in death, let your cry ever be, 'Lord, save me, or I perish ;' and, oh ! believe me, never was such a prayer pleaded in vain. Plead it, and then when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you need fear no ill, for the nail-pierced Hand will be stretched out *there* to save. When you stand at the judgment-seat, *He* will be there to save. He will be with you (if you will but cry unto Him), a very present help in *all* need, until you reach that haven where you would be.

Friends, my heart's prayer is, that He may save you and me, that we perish not. Amen.



the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased by 1.2 million (Office of National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 6.5 million by 2020, and the number of people aged 75 and over to 4.5 million (Office of National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for ageing, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the lives of older people. The strategy is based on three main principles: (1) to ensure that older people have the opportunity to live independently and actively; (2) to ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need; and (3) to ensure that older people are treated with respect and dignity.

The strategy is based on the following assumptions: (1) that older people are a diverse group with different needs and interests; (2) that older people should be able to live independently and actively; (3) that older people should have access to the services and support they need; and (4) that older people should be treated with respect and dignity. The strategy sets out a range of measures to be taken to improve the lives of older people, including: (1) to improve the physical environment; (2) to improve the social environment; (3) to improve the financial environment; and (4) to improve the health and social care environment.

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